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## Senior Citizens in Care Homes: A Psychosocial Exploration

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### ABSTRACT

This research presents a qualitative analysis of the psychosocial conditions of senior citizens in old age homes. It examines causes for joining and its mental impact. Some joined voluntarily and are happy; family admitted most. The paper discusses government/NGO initiatives and sociological approaches. (Counseling, therapy, recreational activities, ecological/strength-based approaches). Sociologist, Social workers, counselors, and caretakers should be committed to solving elderly psychological issues. This paper a descriptive design to understand psychosocial problems of elderly persons. The study is in Shantai (Shantamma) Vrudhashrama in Kuttalawadi, Belagavi, Karnataka. 40 respondents were selected via convenience sampling & interviewed using a standardized method to identify causes & impacts of these problems.

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### INTRODUCTION:

In Indian culture, senior citizens in care homes navigate a shift from traditional joint families (where elders were revered and cared for as duty/dharma) to modern settings, facing challenges like isolation, but finding new community, cultural continuity (yoga, festivals, spiritual sessions), and holistic support in today's evolving facilities, balancing respect for elders with practical needs of urban life. While historically stigmatized, modern homes now offer vibrant social lives, integrated healthcare, and activities (gardening, music, games) to address physical, mental, and emotional well-being, aiming to provide dignity and connection.



Aging is one of the important stages of human beings. Man will face many problems in his life cycle, but problems related to aging are unavoidable and ridden phase of life. The elder persons in the society face a number of problems due to absence of assured and sufficient income to support themselves for their healthcare and other social securities. Problems of aging usually appear after the age of 60 years and most important among them are psychosocial problems. Many social welfare agencies are trying to provide good environment with more facilities but most of them have failed to reduce the psychosocial problems of aged. Here we tried to find out realities of aged people with empirical touch to understand their psychosocial problems, their expectation and remedies with the help of sociological approach. Most common disability among the aged persons was locomotors disability and visual disability. The trend clearly reveals that ageing will emerge as major social challenge in the future; and vast resources will be required towards the support, service, care and treatment of the elderly persons. Exploring psychosocial problems is utmost importance as this age is characterized by feeling of loneliness, fear and depression, isolation from themselves, unpleasant thoughts and negative feelings.

Psycho Condition means a mental condition in which the qualities of a state are relatively constant even though the state itself may be dynamic. Social condition is the situation you have in society because of your income, your occupation or your level of education. For example, you are retired, homeless, a student, or a recipient of social assistance or employment insurance. Social condition is a prohibited ground of discrimination and harassment.

### **SENIOR CITIZENS IN CARE SYSTEM:**

Old age is frequently defined as 60 or 65 years of age or older. Old age has a dual definition. It is the last stage in the life processes of an individual, and it is an age group or generation comprising a segment of the oldest members of a population. Old age should be understood as a whole because it is simultaneously a biological phenomenon with psychological consequences once certain behaviors are pointed out as characteristics of the old age. As in every human situation, old age has an existential dimension that modifies people's relations with time generating changes in their relations with the world and with their own story. Thus, old age should not be understood in any other way than in its wholeness; and as a cultural fact.

In this sense, defining old age is difficult mainly when one desires to be healthy while aging, as everyone currently wishes for themselves and for everybody else. Therefore, it should be understood in its wholeness, in its multiple dimensions once it is a moment in the biological process, but it is still a social and cultural fact. It should also be understood as a phase in the life cycle where, as chronologic age



advances, there are modifications at a bio-psycho-social level that affect the relations of individuals with their social context. A man's life is normally divided into five stages namely: infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood and old age. People are said to be senior citizens when they have reached sixty years of age because those are the ages at which most people retire from work.

Structured social activities, emotional support, and community-building efforts are effective in improving social well-being and reducing loneliness. Examples include Group discussions and peer support groups. Arts and crafts, gentle physical exercise, and other recreational activities. Reminiscence therapy and cognitive behavioral techniques to manage negative thoughts and build resilience.

**These problems can be categorized into five key areas:**

- 1. Physiological Problems:** Old age is a period of physical decline. Even if one does not become sans eyes, sans teeth, sans everything, right away, one does begin to slow down physically. The physical condition depends partly upon hereditary constitution, the manner of living and environmental factors. Vicissitudes of living, faulty diet, malnutrition, infectious, intoxications, gluttony, inadequate rest, emotional stress, overwork, endocrine disorders and environmental conditions like heat and cold are some of the common secondary causes of physical decline.
- 2. Psychological Problems:** Mental disorders are very much associated with old age. Older people are susceptible to psychotic depressions. The two major psychotic disorders of older people are senile dementia (associated with cerebral atrophy and degeneration) and psychosis with cerebral arterio sclerosis (associated with either blocking or ruptures in the cerebral arteries). It has been observed that these two disorders account for approximately 80% of the psychotic disorders among older people in the civilized societies.
- 3. Emotional Problem:** Decline in mental ability makes them dependent. They no longer have trust in their own ability or judgements but still they want to tighten their grip over the younger ones. They want to get involved in all family matters and business issues. Due to generation gap the youngsters do not pay attention to their suggestion and advice. Instead of developing a sympathetic attitude towards the old, they start asserting their rights and power. This may create a feeling of deprivation of their dignity and importance. Loss of spouse during old age is another hazard. Death of a spouse creates a feeling of loneliness and isolation. The negligence and indifferent attitude of the family members towards the older people creates problems that are more emotional.



4. **Social Problems:** Older people suffer social losses greatly with age. Their social life is narrowed down by loss of work associated, death of relatives, friends, spouse, and weak health, which restricts their participation in social activities. The home becomes the centre of their social life, which is confined to the interpersonal relationship with the family members. Due to loss of most of the social roles they once performed, they are likely to be lonely and isolated severe chronic health problem enable them to become socially isolated which results in loneliness and depression.
5. **Financial Problem:** Retirement from service usually results in loss of income and the pensions that the elderly receive are usually inadequate to meet the cost of living, which is always on the rise. With the reduced income, they are reversed from the state of “Chief bread winner to a mere dependent” though they spend their provident fund on marriages of children, acquiring new property, education of children and family maintenance. The diagnosis and treatment of their disease created financial problem for old age. Old age is a period of physical deterioration and social alienation in some cases, loss of spouse, friends, Job, property and physical appearance. In old age physical strength deteriorates, mental stability diminishes, financial power becomes bleak and eyesight suffers a setback. It is a period of disappointment, dejection, disease, repentance and loneliness.

### **Modern Care Homes: A New Cultural Fit**

1. **Holistic & Spiritual Care:** Homes incorporate yoga, meditation, Ayurveda, satsangs, and bhajans to maintain cultural and spiritual connection.
2. **Vibrant Community:** Activities like festivals, rangoli, music, gardening, and sports foster camaraderie, combating loneliness and creating new friendships.
3. **Integrated Support:** They provide readily available healthcare, emotional support (counselors), and facilitate family visits, offering peace of mind.
4. **Preserving Dignity:** Focus is on independence, with flexible plans and assistance with daily tasks, not taking over, preserving dignity.

### **Laws safeguarding senior citizens' interests:**

2011 census of India demonstrated that aged people in India have crossed over 104 million and most of the Indian parents expect their children to look after in their old age, but due to many reasons like globalization, modernization, industrialization and decline in ethical values elder persons are admitted to old age home in large number.



1. To protect the rights and interests of senior citizens national and international agencies have passed many legislations like- “UN Principles of Ageing” was passed in 1982, to promote rights of senior citizens.
2. Indian government has passed The Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act 1956, Criminal Procedure Code 1973(section 125) under these acts, parents can claim for maintenance from their children.
3. The National Policy on Older Persons (NPOP) was announced in January 1999.
4. The International Day for Older Persons (IDOP) is being observed on 1st October every year since 2005,
5. The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act 2007, The Division has been implementing a Central Sector Scheme, "Integrated Programme for Older Persons" (IPOP) since 1992 the objective of improving the quality of life of senior citizens by providing basic amenities like shelter, food, medical care and entertainment opportunities etc.

The following projects are being assisted under the IPOP Scheme:

1. Maintenance of Old Age Homes;
2. Maintenance of Respite Care Homes;
3. Running of Multi Service Canters for Older Persons;
4. Mobile Medicare Unit;
5. Day Care Centre for Care of Old Person with Dementia;
6. Multi Facility Care Centre for Older Widows;
7. Physiotherapy Clinics;
8. Regional Resource and Training Centers;
9. Help lines and Counseling for Older Persons;
10. Programme for Sensitization Schools/College Student;
11. Awareness Projects for Older Persons;
12. Volunteers Bureau for Older Persons;
13. Formation of Vridha Sanghas/Senior Citizen Associations/Self Help Groups;

Any other activity, which is considered suitable to meet the objective of the Scheme. Assam government has step forward in this issue in its 2017 budget that, it set to introduce a law that would make it mandatory for government employees to take care of their parents or need to face deduction from their income to provide adequate care to elderly people.



**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

This paper a descriptive design to understand psychosocial problems of elderly persons. The study is in Shantai (Shantamma) Vruddhashrama in Kuttalawadi, Belagavi, Karnataka. 40 respondents were selected via convenience sampling & interviewed using a standardized method to identify causes & impacts of these problems. Primary methods like interviews, case studies, and observations explored psychosocial problems of senior citizens, covering educational, marital, economic, professional, and psychological aspects. Secondary data was gathered from books, journals, government reports, and the internet.

**Objectives of the Study:**

1. To find out major causes for admitting in old age home and its impact on their mind.
2. To make interventions in reducing psychosocial problems of aged.

The psychosocial exploration of senior citizens in care homes reveals a complex landscape where residents often face significant challenges related to loneliness, anxiety, and a loss of identity and control. The transition from home to institutional care is a major stressor, but effective, person-centered psychosocial interventions can significantly improve their well-being and quality of life.

**RESULTS OF THE STUDY:**

**Table 1: Sex Ratio of Senior Citizens**

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Female	26	65
Male	14	35
Total	40	100

The result pertaining to sex of the respondents who are living in old age home is depicted in table no 1. The above table shows that 65% of respondents are female and 35% are male. Majority of respondents living in old age home are female.

**Table 2: Elderly persons admitted by**

Variables	Respondents	Percentage
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Family members	21	52
Self	11	28
Relatives	05	12
Public	03	08
Total	40	100

The table shows who admitted elderly persons to the old age home: 52% by family members, 28% by own will, 12% by relatives and 08% by Public. Family members admitted majority.

**Table 3: Reasons for admitting to old age home**

Variables	Respondents	Percentage
Orphan	24	66
Aging	07	17.5
Adjust mental problem	07	17.5
Other reasons	02	05
Total	40	100

Table 3 shows reasons for admission to old age home: 60% were orphaned, neglected, or abandoned; 17.5% due to aging; 17.5% due to family adjustment issues; 5% cited other reasons (dumb, poverty, peace).

**Table 4: Expectations of elderly persons**

Variables	Respondents	Percentage
Medical aid	07	17.5
Pension	10	25
Their children will take them back to home	10	25
No expectations	13	32.5
Total	40	100

Table 4 shows senior citizens' expectations: 17.5% want medical aid (chronic diseases); 25% want old age pension; 25% want to be taken back by children; 32.5% have no expectations (mostly orphaned).

**Table 5: Social conditions conditions of senior citizens**

Aspects	Percentage	Percentage
	Yes	No
Marital status(married)	89	11
Children	49	51
Joint family	12	88
Literacy	87	13
Retirement	63	37
Property	49	51

Table No-5 depicts information about psychosocial conditions of senior citizens living in old age home. The results indicated that among 40 respondents 89% of them are married, 11% of them are unmarried, and this is the main reason for joining old age home. 49% of them do not have children so they have become orphan. 88% of them were living in nuclear family and it is made them to join old age home. 87% of senior citizens are literates and 63% of senior citizens worked in government and private organizations. They feel that they are unemployed and they have become financial burden for their family members. 51% of senior citizens said that they do not hold any kind of property.

**Table 6: Psychological conditions of senior citizens**

Aspects	Percentage	Percentage
	Yes	No
Happy	60	40
Lonely	38	62
Nervousness and Anxiety	21	79
Phobia	19	81
Illusion	17	83
Hallucination	24	76
Depression	26	74
Distress	39	61

As the study is based on empirical research information gathered about their psychological conditions. 40% of elders are not happy to stay in old age home. 38% respondents feel lonely to stay in



old age home. 21% of them are nervous and live in Anxiety. 19% of them are living in phobia. 17% of elderly persons are living in their own fantasy world. 24% of respondents are living in hallucination and they feel someone's presence in empty room and following them. 26% are highly depressed because their own children neglect them. 39% are distressed to lead a life as orphan when they are abandoned by their family members and close relatives.

### **Sociological approaches to solve senior citizens' problems in old age homes:**

- 1) Counseling to reduce psychosocial issues
- 2) Recreational activities for social functioning
- 3) Family support for adjustment
- 4) Research on senior citizens' issues
- 5) Regular health checkups
- 6) Positive behavioral reframing
- 7) Ecological approach: homely environment
- 8) Self/others acceptance support
- 9) Community program awareness

### **CONCLUSION:**

Elderly persons are family assets. Health awareness & regular checkups can improve physical/psychological conditions & prevent chronic diseases. Children should counsel & support parents in hard times. Old age home residents from diverse castes, religions, languages. Many women did household work, no income, dependent on family that is why more female residents.

Old age needs interaction & sharing. Government should focus on their health & welfare programs. Elder abuse needs attention; basic needs (food, shelter, healthcare) must be met. The world should accept ageing naturally, discourage anti-age attitudes, ensure dignity, and offer opportunities for participation.

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