

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

A Study on Senior Citizens and Their Socio-Economic Problems

Parveen A. Shaikh

Research Scholar, Department of Social Work, Karnataka State Women's University, Bijapur, India

Abstract:

The adverse conditions of senior citizens have emerged as global phenomena. Number of person with old age worldwide is estimated to be around 605 million today. This aging population is posing insurmountable challenges both for the developed as well as developing countries. India being a developing country is also among countries that accumulate a plethora of aged persons and which are also speculated to be multiplied in the coming years. India is a country where all the human beings are respected and honored. Now the scenario is changing. Due to the impact of industrialization, globalization and modernization family and social structures have taken a new shape. This change, in one way or the other, has affected the overall status and role of the elderly within the domain of social affairs. The current study in this context identifies the socio-economic problems as well as factors responsible for the problems of persons with old age. For the present study 50 respondents were selected. Samples were selected from 3 taluks from Bijapur district namely Bijapur, Sindagi and Indi. The data was analyzed with the help of frequency and percentage. Analysis illustrates that the senior citizens are facing problems with denial, verbal abuse, separation from spouses, being away from children etc. They are facing problems related to health and financial aspects.

Keywords: Senior citizens, socio-economic problems, deprivation, rejection

1. Introduction

A worldwide transition is coming in the ageing as literature shows an increase in life expectancy due to medical facilities. Like other countries of the world, the demographic transition in India has begun since 1990s. The major causes of increasing aged population in India is due to consistent decline in mortality with a resultant rise in life expectancy and a reduction in total fertility rate in recent years.

Ageing of the population is one of the most important demographic factors that have emerged in the 21st century. The number of elderly has steadily multiplied since 1948, due to the decreased fertility and increased life expectancy rates worldwide (World Bank, 2011). Ageing has been defined as the total constellation of social, biological and psychological changes that occur in last stage of life (Richard, 1962). Moreover, the world's elderly population (60 years and older) had already marked the figure of 251 million in 1950 and 488 million in 1990. Based upon the data as mentioned earlier, a more alarming number i.e. 1,250 million is estimated to be added to this bulk of ageing populous by the year 2025 which shows a startling increase of 146 per cent (Global Statistics, 2012). Most of the current and future increase will take place in the developing world, particularly Asian and South Asian countries. Further, it is expected that South Asia will experience a dramatic increase in its elderly population by nearly nine times between 2010 and 2025, when life expectancy will increase to 75 years for men and 82 years for women (Rehmatullah, 2011).

Besides, the varying effects of ageing on some major aspects of the society such as health, social security, education, business opportunities, socio-cultural activities and family relations (Kocaman, 2007), there are, however, factors which create problems for persons with old age. Among them the most important factor is the changing functions of family institution. Although family has still a central position in addressing emotional and socio-economic needs of them. The ability of persons with old age to cope with the changes of health, income and social activities depend to a great extent on the support the person gets from his/ her family members (Sivamurthy & Wadakannavar, 2001).

Meanwhile, values concerning the respect and honor of the old people have been changing and the status of old parents has been affected. Traditional family structure is also getting weaker due to breakdown of joint families to nuclear family and thereby creating more and more problems for the elder members of the family as in joint family, loving atmosphere of house and friendly relationships among the members gave security and recognition to the older members of the family whereas in nuclear family structure elderly parents have little or no authority and their care and support is neglected. (Gulzar et al., 2008) In addition to personal factors, such as low contribution to family finances and meager pension (Muhammad et. al, 2009), changes in family structures have necessarily brought about a considerable transition in the status and role of the elderly within the domain of domestic affairs. These factors jointly act to marginalize them to the edge of society in terms of limited access to their relatives or neighbors, diminished decision making role, limited facilities, excursion and use of an abusive language by family members against them. Consequently they feel discomfort and sense of frustration prevails upon them. Needs of the elderly are hardly met when the total economic dependency of the elderly upon the family is accompanied by the lack of a holistic socio-economic

developmental strategy in the country that targets the welfare of its ageing population (Ali & Kiani, 2003). In this age of severe inflation, where a single source of income can hardly fulfill needs of even a single person, the situation of aged pensioners is pitiable. Out of total Senior citizens not even half are getting the pension.

2. Objectives of the Study

- To study the Socio-economic problems faced by senior citizens in Bijapur district.
- To find out various health problems associated with senior citizens.

3. Research Design

The main intention of the study is to deal with finding the various socio-economic and health related problems of senior citizens of Bijapur district. A household survey of three taluks, i.e. Bijapur, Sindagi and Indi of Bijapur district. Fifty senior citizens (male & female) above the age of 60 were interviewed. The data was collected by means of semi-structured interview schedule as well as observation method. The collected information has been processed through simple frequency designed tables.

4. Results and Discussions

A quantitative approach has been utilized in order to analyze the data and figure out various problems of the target population. The data has been discussed with the help of frequency and percentage in order to accomplish the mentioned objectives.

Category	Frequency	Percentage
60-70	35	70%
71-80	10	20%
81 & above	5	10%

Table 1: Age distribution of the Respondents (n=50)

Age is one of the important factor that represent demographic qualities. In the same context the *table 1* expresses the demographic qualities focusing age along with frequency and percentage. The quantitative analysis illustrates that among the total respondents i.e.50 (100%), major portion of respondents 35 (70%) belongs to age category 60 to 70. It has been discussed that old people are the pillar of society but are deprived of their basics rights at the old stage of their life.

10 (20%) respondents belong to the category (71-80). However, low segment of the respondents i.e. 05 (10%) belong to age group category 81 and above. In a nutshell, it has been concluded that high portion of respondent belonged to the age category of 60-70 years were in the initial stage of old age and rest were in the oldest age group.

Living Status	Frequency	Percentage
Alone	2	4%
With spouse	13	26%
With unmarried daughter	03	6%
With married sons	25	50%
With unmarried sons	7	14%
With relatives	0	00%

Table 2: Living Status of the Respondents (n=50)

Table 2 shows the living status of the respondents. As the universe of the study is a Taluk based area and less number of the respondents (4%) were living alone. These taluks are not influenced by modernization and the children are somehow settled in native place itself with their livelihoods. It is obvious from the data that out of 50, 13 (26%) respondents i.e. were living with their spouses. In traditional societies parents like to live with their sons not with daughters but according to the collected data 03(06%) respondents were living with their daughters. However in rural areas the cultural values are still strong enough as justified by the data. Moreover, 25(50%) respondents were living with their married sons. 7(14%) respondents were living with their unmarried sons in spite of having married sons. And none of the respondents were living with relatives.

Main source of income	Frequency	Percentage
Pension	15	30%
Dependent on children	19	38%
Own laboring/work	5	10%
Property	7	14%
No income source	4	8%

Table 3: Income source of the Respondents

It is a general problem of the senior citizens to depend on others. According to (Saroj et al., 2007), poverty of persons with old ages leads them to an average, not a high status. *Table 3* shows the source of income of the respondents. In the current study majority of the respondents (38%) are economically dependent upon their children, which is a problem for the persons with old

age. As per the data collected, 15(30%) respondents are economically independent through their pension. 10% respondents are still bound to earn their livelihood through their laboring or small jobs. As most of the parents are aware about the economic problems in old age therefore they have possessed property in their life. Out of the collected data 7(14 %) respondents were dependent upon their personal property e.g. land, shops etc. In these taluks people are generally own land. And it is the sad thing that 8% of the respondents do not have any income source.

Problems faced	Frequency	Percentage
Medicines/health checkups	12	24%
Personal Purchase	6	12%
Ceremonies/Functions	2	4%
Daily Expenses	5	10%
No problem	25	50%

Table 4: Problems faced by the respondents due to economic dependency

When there is no income or less income senior citizens have to approach their children to fulfill their needs. Senior citizens at this age will be have to go for regular health checkups, medicinal needs, day to day purchases, and other requirements during functions like naming ceremony, birthdays and marriage of the relatives. Majority 50% of the respondents have absolutely no problem in managing their expenses either through own income or through their children.

In the very same context, respondents reported their concern on medical problems, personal purchase and the required amount of money for different ceremonies/functions, which they were facing due to economic dependency. According to the data collected, 12(24%) respondents whined, they were facing problems in the purchase of medicines. Regarding the purchase of personal items 6 (12%) respondents reported that they were facing problems to some extent to purchase personal items. Only 2 (4%) respondents were facing financial problems in the participation of ceremonies up to some extent. 10% of the respondents are having problems for their daily expenses.

Problem face due to age factor	Frequency	Percentage
Discrimination/denial	3	6%
Health discrimination	7	14%
Verbal abuse	18	36%
Separation of sons	10	20%
Not Applicable	12	24%

Table 5: Problems Facing due to Age Factor

Our elders say that the younger generation is not like them. They don't have the values and they don't respect their elders. Present study revealed that majority 36% of respondents face verbal abuse from their son and daughter –in-laws. They feel very ashamed to express this. 20% of the respondents feel sad for being away from their children. For the reason like education, job and marriage children are away from their parents. And the parents want to spend their time with children and grand children. Another major chunk of the respondents (24%) doesn't have any issues in their life. 7 respondents shared that they are discriminated health wise. Their health needs are not taken care of. And three respondents have the feeling of abandonment as the children are not happy to keep the parents with them.

5. Conclusions

Human beings have become so greedy in their life that they need parents' property, but they don't want their blessings. Research studies on the issue of ageism disclose the facts that due to the growing age; multiple social issues encounter senior citizens. The current research study also support the argument as discussed by other researchers and scholars that in the society under study the same issues in regard of aged people occur. It is not a story of one family or one village. It is a worldwide story. The collected information discloses the fact that aged people of above 60 years face the problems of discrimination along-with alienation in the target area, which on the other side make them isolated from the rest of population. Similarly, such people are considered as a burden on family members and they treat them with a complex of being the deprived of the rest of population.

In the economic context, senior citizens are non-productive in terms of economic productivity not only for the family members but also for the rest of community. In this regard, their position at the home and also in communal relations is not well adjusted and they fall in the feeling of anomie. The parents are so self-less that they forget to keep a share of their property for their old age. They shower all the love, care, affection, savings and property to their children. And in return they don't even get proper respect for what they did for so many years.

The data further elaborate that age is not only an economic and social factor but also leads to physical, medical and psychological disability to a larger extent. The information shows that majority of the respondents in the area feel weaknesses, non-comfort and physical weakness in their later age. Further, such factors not only affect the social, economic and physiological condition of the person but also weakened the social values of the community that leads to social stigma on the social fabric. Thus in a nut-shell, the problems of the senior citizens in increasing with the passage of time, and soon the society will witness a major shift towards the formation and establishment of old aged group house schemes.

6. References

1. Furdous et al., (2008). Socio-economic problems of persons with old ages and their adjustment in Punjab, Pakistan, Pak. J. Agri. Sci, 45(1).
2. Kocaman & Tuncer. (2007). The situation of elderly population in turkey and national plan of action on aging. State Planning Organization 3-ISSN2223-9553, 1(3).
3. Meschede et al., (2011). From bad to worse; senior economic insecurity on the rise, Boston, USA: Institute on Assets & Social Policy, Research and Policy Brief
4. Sivamurthy & Wadakannavar. (2001). Care and support for the elderly population in India: results from a survey of the persons with old age in rural north Karnataka, India. Available <http://www.silverinnings.com/docs/Ageing Indian.pdf>
5. Raj et al., (2007). Psycho-social Status of Senior Citizen and Related Factors. Department of Human Development & Family Studies, CCS Haryana Agricultural University, Hisar 125 004, Haryana, India Ecol. 22(3): 255-259
6. Rehmatullah. (2011). Challenges for persons with old ages, daily dawn, October 4, 2011
7. p.30.
8. Richard. (1962). Aging and personality. Newyork: John wiley and sons,inc.
9. Sabzwari & Azhar, (2010). Aging in Pakistan-A New Challenge; Ageing Int DOI 10.1007/s12126-010-9082-z # Springer Science+Business Media.
10. Saeed et al., (2011). Discrimination and health status of persons with old age in Chakwal: Pakistan. Academic Research International ISSN2223-9553 Volume I issue 3(3).
11. Saroj et al., (2007). Psycho-social Status of Persons with old age and Related Factors, Department of Human Development & Family Studies, CCS Haryana Agricultural University, Hisar 125 004, Haryana, India.
12. Strandh. (2000). Different Exit Routes from Unemployment and their Impact on Mental Well-Being: The Role of the Economic Situation and the Predictability of the Life Course. Work Employment Society, 14(3), p. 459-479.
13. Hamid Alam1, Farman Ali, Umar Daraz, Waqar Ahmad, Ibrahim, Socio-economic problems of persons with old age in districts DIR lower Khyber pakhtunkhwa Pakistan, Part-I: Social Sciences and Humanities, Vol. 4 No. 1 January 2013L: 2223-9553, ISSN-L: 2223-9553, ISSN: 2223-9944