

# Social Problems of Institutionalized Elderly Women in Coimbatore City - A Survey Report

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**Abstract:** *This study was done to elucidate the social problems of the institutionalized elderly women staying in old age homes. Aging is a universal phenomenon and is biological also. India has the largest number of elderly people aged 60 plus. Population ageing became an emergence of ageing and it is a social concern. Due to population ageing, there is pressure in all aspects of elderly care. This study was conducted in old age homes in and around Coimbatore district, Tamil Nadu. The total numbers of elderly women present in the registered old age homes were 636 out of which 400 were selected randomly based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Finally, all 400 samples were selected for this study. The simple random sampling technique was adopted for the study to take the samples in the old age homes. The fourteen items were used to assess the reasons for elderly women to move to old age homes. The result reveals that Among 400 elderly women, 86(21.5%) were never ready to move to old age home, 70(17.5%) were rarely ready to move to old age home, 83(20.8%) were sometimes move to old age home, 77(19.3%) were often move to old age home, 84(21.0%) were always prefer to move to old age home. When 14 reasons were ranked out, majority of the elderly women were ranked first for poor health conditions then for financial problem, living alone, no children or close relative, loneliness, become burden for the family, children cheating in financial matters, unable to adjust with children, having only daughter, difference of opinion with in laws / others, misbehavior from your children, mental illness, migrated children, and physically challenged were ranked one by one respectively by the elderly women in the old age homes.*

**Keywords:** Elderly women, old age home

## 1. Introduction

Population ageing became an emergence of ageing and it is a social concern. Advent of modernization, industrialization, urbanization, occupational differentiation, education and growth of individual philosophy has eroded traditional values and caused for the disintegration of joint families and emergence of nuclear families ended with the negligence of the elderly. These adventures have led to defiance and decline of respect for elders among members of younger generation (Masillamani, 2015).

Greying of population is one of the most significant characteristics of the twenty-first century. Despite substantial growth in proportion of both male and female elderly around the world, a strong preponderance of women has been established amongst 60 years and above in most of the countries. This phenomenon is called "Feminisation of ageing" which is currently dominant in developed nations but is picking up pace in developing countries. As per census 2001, in India there were 1021 elderly women per one thousand elderly men. Elderly women face numerous deprivations during their life course due to various sociocultural factors. (Gupta Nidhi, 2013).

Mushrooming of Old Age Homes in India is in the nascent stage. Old age home are places where in older persons stay either individually or with their spouse or with their family members. These old age homes provide food, shelter, health care and other services either free of cost or by charging the persons who are staying with them. Sensing the rapid surge in the elderly population, lot of old age homes have started mushrooming targeting the affluent elders and pensioners who get a stable income. Even though few old age homes function with real service mentality many old age homes are functioning with the main objective of financial benefit

capitalizing the advantage of the senior citizens requirements. (Bindu, M, Bhatt, 2014)

The interests of the elderly to spend their old age in sacred places, the migration of children in search of employment opportunities, their maladjustment in family and poverty of the elderly are the major reasons for the Indian elderly to shift to old age homes. But since the idea of living in old age homes is relatively new in India, the adjustment process of the old age home residents, their feelings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction and expectations from family members provide an interesting field of inquiry. (Mishra, 2008).

## 2. Literature Review

Jose & Cherayi (2017) conducted a recent study on disposed social exclusion caused among older persons in Kerala significantly increased psychosocial disability due to age identity associated stigma and discrimination. A multistage cluster sampling of 573 older persons aged 65 + from elder care centers and living in families was recruited and administered a standardized rating scale to test the hypotheses. Psychosocial disability was significantly correlated with age identity, stigma and discrimination.

Singh, et al., (2017) conducted a cross sectional study among sixty elderly females living in community and old age homes in relation to their perception towards old age and self. The result revealed that acceptance towards old age and generativity found to be better compared to elderly women living in old age home. Community women were more satisfied with their life and exhibited better emotional support but elderly in old age home perceived better instrumental support. Finding ended with both community elderly and old age home elderly found to have certain positive aspects.

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Sampath Kumar, et al., (2015) conducted a study on understanding elderly abuse: A special reference to elderly in an urban slum of Coimbatore to identify the prevalence of elderly abuse. Elder Abuse Suspicion Index (EASI) tool was used to collect the data by interview schedule. The finding showed that 70% of them were between 60 and 70 years, females and were not working. 50% of them had assets and lived with their spouse, while 20% lived with their married daughter and 30% with their sons. 70% of them had one or more medical problems like Hypertension, Diabetes mellitus and Asthma. 50% of them expected help from their spouse, 40% from their children and 10% from their grandchildren. The notable finding that, the elderly who lives with their married daughters faced lesser abuse than the old people who reside with their son.

Kumari, P. (2015) had done a study on Elderly living in old age homes: a comparative study of Banaras and Lucknow. It was to understand and compare the background profile and satisfaction of the elderly residing in the old age homes. Purposive sampling was used to collect the data from 60 elderly women by using specially designed Interview schedule and observation technique. It concluded that the general profile of the elderly women living in old age homes of Lucknow were better than Banaras, had more satisfied with old age home facilities provided to them.

Acharya (2007) conducted a survey on senior citizens and the elderly homes. The survey has tried to clarify the problems and challenges of elderly homes and the elders. Effort has been provided to see whether the elderly homes are helpful in providing proper care and support for the senior citizens. The data was collected and interviewed from 61 senior citizens out of total 122 in 7 homes, interview of all seven home's authorized persons, published/unpublished profile of the homes. The field observation shows significant positive effects of homes on the life of senior citizen. The survey results provided that elderly homes are favorable for the residents and the society as a whole despite of some problems, particularly for those who are uncomfortable in their family.

### Statement of the problem

Social problems of institutionalized elderly women in Coimbatore city.

### Objective

To identify the reason for elderly women to move to the institutional homes.

### Methods

Descriptive information was collected from each elderly woman to meet the objectives of present study. So, the investigator was adopted descriptive survey design for the present study. Survey design was used to assess the social problems of the institutionalized elderly women in Coimbatore city.

### Participants

The target population for the present study was elderly women residing in the old age homes. The accessible population was elderly women residing in the old age homes of Coimbatore city, Tamil Nadu. Elderly women who aged

60 and above were selected for the study based on inclusion and exclusion criteria.

### Instrument

For the current study, the researcher used quantitative method of data collection that include face to face interview schedule. Structured interviews were conducted at the institutional care settings as appropriate. Respondents were contacted before the interviews and interview venues were fixed based on study participants' convenience. The following tools were used for the study, Questionnaire on socio-demographic details and scale to assess the social problems of elderly women in old age homes.

### Scoring procedure

Many factors made the elderly women to move to old age homes. The factors are financial problem, loneliness, poor health condition, children cheating in financial matters, unable to adjust with children, become burden for the family, misbehaviour from children, difference of opinion with in laws / others, migrated children, no children or close relatives, having only daughter, living alone, mental illness and physically challenged. These factors were included in the 4 point rating scale with 14 items. The responses given by the samples were scored as 4 for never, 3 for rare, 2 for some times and 1 for always. The scores of each item were then summed up to find their overall reason for elderly women move to the old age home. The Cronbach's alpha is used to test the reliability of a multi item scale. The score was 0.856. It suggests that our scale has adequate measurement properties. Weighted Average scale was used to rank the reasons one by one by the elderly women in the old age homes.

### Analysis

The collected data was analyzed using statistical package. Frequency distribution was used to evaluate the effect of socio-demographic variables on the study variables. Weighted Average scale was used to convert the qualitative information into quantitative one. Chi-Square was used to find out the significant association between the socio-demographic variables and the reason for elderly women to move to old age home. P value of <0.05 was considered as statistically significant.

### Procedure

The respondents were oriented and educated about the purpose and objectives of the study and their informed consent was obtained in writing before interviews. Confidentiality was strictly assured and maintained to the study participants.

## 3. Results and Discussion

**Table 1:** Socio –Demographic Profile of The Elderly Women

	Socio-Demographic Profile	n=400	
		Frequency	Percentage
Age	60-65	112	28.0
	66-70	200	50.0
	<70	88	22.0
Place of previous residence	Rural	80	20.0
	Urban	320	80.0

Nature of the family	Joint	40	10.0
	Nuclear	360	90.0
Marital status	Married	170	42.5
	Unmarried	63	15.7
	Widowed	74	18.5
	Divorced	43	10.8
	Separated	50	12.5
Educational status	Illiterate/primary(1-4)	106	26.5
	Upper primary(5-7)	32	8.0
	Secondary(8-10)	86	21.5
	Higher Secondary	59	14.8
	Graduation	71	17.7
Occupational status	Post-graduation	46	11.5
	Unemployed	165	41.3
	Self Employed	38	9.5
	Private employment	69	17.3
	Government	54	13.5
	Agriculturist	45	11.3
No. of children	Others	29	7.1
	One	32	8.0
	Two	88	22.0
	More than three	112	28.0
Years of Stay in old Age Home	No children	168	42.0
	>1year	87	21.8
	1-5years	143	35.8
	6-10years	71	17.6
Source of monthly income	<10years	99	24.8
	Own or husband pension	110	27.5
Opinion about Elderly Women Feels Better	Send by children or relatives	70	17.5
	Old age home	240	60.0
	Own house	160	40.0

The above table 1 shows that majority about fifty percentage of respondents were between the age group of 66 to 70 years. About 80% respondents were from urban areas. About 90% of the respondents belonged to nuclear family. The marital status of the elderly women in old age home shows that mostly (42.5%) the respondents belonged to married category. The educational status of the elderly women in the old age home indicates that 26.5% of the respondents were illiterate. Out of 400 respondents, (41.3%) majority were unemployed. Also (42%) of the respondents had no children. The above table clarifies that, 35.8% of the respondents were staying in old age home between 1-5 years. About 27.5% of the respondents had income from own or from husband pension. About 60% of them reported that they felt better to live in the old age homes.

Reasons for the elderly women to move to the institutional homes, n = 400

S. No	Items	Number of Respondents	
		Frequency	Percentage %
1	Never	86	21.5
2	Rarely	70	17.5
3	Sometimes	83	20.8
4	Often	77	19.3
5	Always	84	21

Source: Primary data.

The table depicts that Reasons for the elderly women to move to the institutional homes were assessed. Among 400 elderly women, 86(21.5%) were never ready to move to old age home, 70(17.5%) were rarely ready to move to old age

home, 83(20.8%) were sometimes move to old age home, 77(19.3%) were often move to old age home, 84(21.0%) were always prefer to move to old age home. A chi square value for age, gender, place of previous residence, nature of the family, marital status, educational status, occupation of women, no. of children, years of stay in old age home, source of monthly income, frequency of visit by family members had association with reason for the elderly women to move to the institutional homes at the 0.05 level of significance.

Weighted average scale used to find out the reason for the elderly women to move to the institutional homes. Among 14 reasons listed out, majority of the elderly women ranked first the poor health conditions, and secondly the financial problem and then living alone, no children or close relatives, loneliness, becoming burden for the family, children cheating in financial matters, unable to adjust with children, having only daughter, difference of opinion with in laws / others, misbehaviour from your children, mental illness, migrated children, and physically challenged ranked one by one respectively. (Sampath Kumar.S, 2015), gave notable finding in the study that, the elderly who lives with their married daughters faced lesser abuse than the old people reside with their son. Factors compelling elderly to reside in old age homes, Misbehaviour of son and daughters-in-law was found to be major reasons for residing in old age home.

#### 4. Conclusion

The increase in the elderly population, in spite of being a conquest, carries with it a series of personal, social and economic consequences. Aging is a natural process and not necessarily a synonym for disease. However, no one can deny that, with the natural wear of the body, this becomes more vulnerable and less resilient. This process is often combined with the psychological suffering in function of personal, economic, and social loss, and the reduction of the subject's autonomy. Thus, the elderly with greater or lesser degree of physical, mental, and/or psychological impairment needs support. In some cases, the support is given at the very heart of the family and, in others which is not the ideal, but in many cases, it is the only outlet for the elderly has the minimum support. In both cases, as previously stated, the figure of the caregiver is essential. Finally, this study showed that older women have a negative view of old age, which is more pronounced in institutionalized people. Some possibilities of intervention towards the deconstruction of this type of negative images raised. There is the need to build a more positive and informed perspective, which can be done through education about the aging process and the promotion of intergenerational networks.

Social factors are most important ones that determine the quality of life of an institutionalized aged woman. The present study was aimed to assess the social problems of institutionalized elderly women in Coimbatore city. There is a need to create awareness among elderly women about the needs, experiences and coping styles, it makes them to empower emotionally vibrant. Elderly women who live in old age homes are lonely and have almost nothing to look forward. The finding of the elderly women on different age groups helps us to understand the nature and extent of

various problems faced by them. The investigator recognized many problems. Mental health problems were misunderstood. Elderly suffer a number of social problems in the community including stigmatization and abuse. Governmental and non governmental agencies should volunteer to care of an elderly. So that the elderly women could spend their remaining part of life in the old age homes with better health, peace and happiness.

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