



Elderly in Old Age Homes: Issues and Challenges

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Abstract- Being old is a universal and unavoidable occurrence having three facets: biological, psychological, and social. Today the fundamental reason for increasing aging is the availability of advanced medical facilities, social protection and living standards. The present paper attempts to identify the issues and challenges faced by the elderly living in the old age homes. The research methodology of the paper is based on case studies which included elderly living in old age homes of Jhansi district. The study found that in the old age homes, the elderly were suffering from various types of issues and challenges like health and hygiene issues, social isolation, etc. Also, the elder people are not very much satisfied with the facilities provided to them in the old age homes, because the facilities are either negligible or not available on time.

Keywords: Elderly, Challenges and Facilities in Old Age Home

I. Introduction

The rise of ageing population all over the world at an unprecedented speed has contributed to the multiple challenges for the elderly. Across the world, the declining fertility and increased longevity have resulted in higher number and proportion of the older people (Sidhu, 2014). A lot of people in India too are getting older (60 years or above). Ageing is currently proceeding most rapidly in India, has the second highest number of elders aged 60 and above (Sharma, 2007). Today the fundamental reason for increasing aging is the availability of advanced medical facilities, social protection and living standards (Kumar, 2019).

Also, the family support and senior care are likely to disappear in the near future (Basha, 2017) Joint families have collapsed, and the smaller families with the young couple having no time to care for their old aged parents. The condition of these elderly in such families has become more critical. They have difficult time, adjusting to their children's modern lifestyles. As a result, a large number of old aged people from their home town have turned to old age homes for assistance (Showkat, 2016). Moreover, factors like as urbanisation, modernization, and good employment possibilities have transformed the traditional roles of the old aged people in society and family. As a result of this, the provision for old aged care is progressively being handed on to institutionalised care. Therefore, the concept of Old Age Homes is born (Kumar 2019)

II. Objectives of the Study

- To study the socio-economic background of the elderly living in old age homes.
- To identify the various problems of the elderly in old age homes.
- To examine about the facilities provided to the elder people in the old age homes.



III. Methodology of the Present Study

In the present paper case studies of six elderly people from the two old age homes of Jhansi district have been done by the researchers, so that the condition of these elderly can be studied in depth. The sample for the study has been selected through convenience sampling method. Means that the elder people who were interviewed were selected merely on the basis availability. Both male and female respondents were involved in the study. The researcher has collected the information through semi structured interview schedule, after obtaining consent from the elder people of the Old Age Homes. Further the case studies have been analyzed on the basis of narratives given by the respondents.

Case 1 (Raj Rani, name changed)

Raj Rani, aged 90, is a widow. She lives with her son and daughter-in-law. She is religious in nature. Raj Rani's son and daughter-in-law both are working, due to which Raj Rani used to do few household chores and also look after her grandchildren. But her health has not been good from some time due to which she needs to take care of herself. Therefore, her son and daughter-in-law have left her to live in an old age home. In the beginning Raj Rani felt very lonely in the old age home but afterwards when she mingled with other elderly in old age home, she started enjoying. Later with the passage of time her relationship with other members of the old age home also becomes cordial. Further when she was asked about the challenges and facilities in old age homes, she answered that: cleanliness of rooms and toilets were not good. Nobody came to clean the room and toilets regularly. Bedsheet were not changed for more than a week. She also doesn't like the way food served in old age home. Regarding the health facilities she reported that "no dispensary is available in old age home. No doctor visit for a routine health check-up. The expenses for her medicines were borne by her son.

The case study revealed that the respondent felt happy in the old age home, sometime missing her family members. She was taken care in old age home but also faces challenges in terms of hygiene and cleanness. In terms of health facilities also proper medical care was not taken. Therefore, the old age home provides only basic facilities like food and cheap-living arrangement.

Case 2 (Kiran Bai, name changed)

Kiran Bai, aged about 85 years, is a Hindu general caste widow with two sons and no connection with business. She is an uneducated house wife, having low health condition due to stomach related problems since last 4 years, having good memory but facing problems in walking properly. One of her sons lives in the city and she used to live in the village with their other sons. She stated that the family members did not mind as long as she used to help with the housework. When her health condition deteriorated and she herself became dependent on others. Her family did not want her to live with them, so the family members sent her to an old age home. Her own family considered her a burden. She has been living in the old age home for the last 3 years. Kiran reported that the daily needs and health related needs are not properly taken care of by the old age home so she was not satisfied. She was living under compulsion in an old age home. Kiran's sons pay a nominal amount once in a year which is very less. Due to which her expenses and daily needs could not be met. Whenever Kiran feels better in her health, she does her daily chores herself. She further reported the old age home is not very



spacious, rooms are very small and also not clean properly for most of the time. On the name of recreational activities one television is available in a common room. only few channels of bhajans and prabachans keep on continuing all time. There is no such area or garden space where we all old mated can sit together and enjoy for some time. If some of us wants to do exercise we do in our room, there is no yoga or exercise instructor for us.

This case study showed that the respondent was living under compulsion in an old age home. Due to non-cordial relationship with her family members, she lives in an old age home. The respondent was not at all satisfied with the facilities provided in old age home and have to face many challenges likes lack of space and lack of recreational activities

Case 3 (Raj Tripathi, name changed)

Satish Tripathi age is about 72 years old and he is a widower male of general caste of Hindu religion who has one son and one daughter and retired from the post of Assistant Engineer in PWD and receives sufficient amount as pension, currently not working, who has the problem of blood clotting in the brain, heart attack, BP, sugar problem, there is also a problem in walking, his medical facilities and daily needs are met by his pension and old age home. Satish wanted independent peaceful life so he was living in old age home for 4 years. Raj's pension takes care of his expenses easily. In the old age home, his daily and health related needs are not properly taken care of. He reported that no special care is taken of cleanliness in the old age home. We have washroom attached in our rooms but not cleaned daily even we pay monthly amount separately for all this. Frequently doctor's visits are also not available for us. Also, there was no good facility of convince from the side of old age home. When we have to go outside for some work, many times we have to wait for long for the convince. He further mentions that there were not much facilities available in old age home but its better from our own family home, at least there is no interference and living happily with my old mates in this old age home.

The case also revealed that the respondent belonged to an affluent background. He does not like anyone's interference in his life, due to which he lives in an old age home, away from his family. Moreover, despite of facing numerous issues and challenges regarding inadequate medical attention and cleanliness the respondent was living happily with his old mates and coping with his old age.

Case 4 (Mohd Irfaan, name changed)

Mohammad Irfan is about 80 years old, an old man of Muslim religion who has two sons and two daughters. He has undergone a cataract operation, is less visible in the eyes and has difficulty in walking and remains unhealthy. Earlier he worked as a tailor but after his eyes operation he stopped his work. Due to Irfan's antagonistic relationship with his son and daughter-in-law, he lives in an old age home. His daily needs and health related needs are taken care of in old age homes but it is not necessary that his needs are fulfilled on time.

He unable to do some of his daily work due to his low vision but can do some work easily. The caregiver of old age home helps him in carrying out their daily tasks but



most of the times the caretaker is not available for help. Quality and healthy food is also not provided to us. Many times, we have same menu of breakfast and lunch. In summers too much electricity cut down is there but no facility of generator is there, only we have one bulb connection in our room from inverter, no inverter connection for fan or cooler. Dusting and cleaning of our bedsheets, rooms and toilets were not done on the daily basis. Moreover, he mentioned that there is very less funding or lack of financial resources so the old age home unable to expand much on the facilities to the mates of old age home.

The case study found that the health condition of Mohammad Irfan is pathetic. He has an antagonistic relationship with his family due to which he lives in an old age home. Irfan's eyesight is weak and he cannot see properly due to which he finds it difficult to perform his daily tasks. Irfan has lots of problems in old age home and not very happy with the facilities provided to elder people in old age home but somehow, he is spending his life, talking and sharing his sorrow with other elder people in old age home.

Case 5 (Sanno Mishra, name changed)

Sanno aged 69 years is a scheduled caste woman who has 3 sons and 2 daughter-in-law. She is an uneducated housewife who is in normal health but has hearing loss. After the death of her husband, Sanno started living in an old age home because of the changing behaviour of her sons and daughter in law, quarrelling with each other regarding house hold chores and living routine. She has been living in the old age home for almost 2 years. she gets old age pension and she also earn few money by doing knitting and sewing in her spare time. All this help her to meet her daily basic requirement. Malti Devi mentioned that if she had not received old age pension, it would have been impossible to meet her daily needs. She reported that she pays minimal charges every month to old age home but still her she is not taken care properly in old age homes. There are no proper, well-arranged living arrangements in old age home. There were no separate rooms available, only dormitory with board partition is one option to stay in this old age home. Very few workers are available to take care of the elder people. Their food quality and services are also not very good. She further stated that “what to do? It’s in my destiny to stay here even though I have children”.

The case study reported that Sanno belonged to a middle-class family. She adopted the old age home as her home when her family started having estrangement regarding her stay in home. There are many problems in old age home but still Malti is managing her life as she has no option to go some other place? Sometimes she feels very bad, misses her son, daughter-in-law and gran children but try to be happy by engaging herself in the service of God and many other activities in old age home

Case 6 (Samta Singh, name changed)

Samta, 69 years old, is a Hindu general caste widow. Who has three daughters. After the daughters got married and after the death of her husband, she became completely alone. Samta did not want to live with her married daughters, so she lives in an old age home. Samta is suffering from many health problems. Most of the time, she suffers from restlessness and headache. she unable to do her daily activities by herself. Samta's health condition is pathetic, she does not see and hear properly and she has high blood pressure and diabetes. In the old age home, she does not get proper care. Her daily needs



and health related needs are not met by old age home properly. She is not happy in old age home. She reported that the food in old age home is of low quality. They just gave us dal and potato. No green vegetables or egg or any non-veg is there for us. Samta is very soft-spoken lady and has a cordial relationship with other elder people of the old age home. So, she spends her time by singing Keertan and bhajans with her old mate of old age home.

This case revealed that the respondent belonged to an ordinary background. She lives in an old age home as she has no son and all daughters are married and settled. She is unable to do any of her work due to her poor health condition. She needs help from others in old age home to do her work but she has to wait for hours and hours so she is not happy in old age home. Samta considers the old age home as her only hope to stay and try to be alive.

IV. Conclusion

In this study, the researcher found that the elder people living in old age homes came from different types of socio-economic background. Due to the old age, they do not have harmony with their children. Almost all the respondents were suffering from two-three health problems. Apart from their worse health conditions they were also not happy, staying far from their family members. During the conversation with the elder people about the facilities available in the old age homes, it was found that majority of the elderly were not satisfied with facilities and care provided to them in old age homes. The facilities provided by the old age homes were insufficient to meet the daily needs on time, due to which these elder people find it difficult to meet their basic needs. Approximately all the elderly live together happily and share each other's sorrows and happiness with each other and also help each other but some are unable to adjust in this atmosphere. They miss their home and children; they don't want to not live in old age homes but they live under compulsion.

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