



“A Sociological Study Of The Problems And Care Of Elderly People”

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ABSTRACT:

Aging is a significant phase of life that brings numerous social, psychological, and economic challenges. This research investigates the problems and care systems of elderly individuals in Shankarpura village, Gujarat, focusing on family support, financial dependency, healthcare access, and awareness of government welfare programs. Using a descriptive research methodology, the study surveyed 47 elderly individuals, analysing their social conditions, financial stability, and access to healthcare services. The results reveal a decline in traditional caregiving structures, financial insecurities, and low awareness of government schemes. This study emphasizes the urgent need for policy reforms and stronger community involvement to improve elderly well-being.

Keywords: Elderly care, social isolation, financial dependency, aging, healthcare access, government schemes

INTRODUCTION:

Aging is a universal process that impacts individuals physically, socially, and economically. In India, life expectancy has increased, leading to a rapid rise in the elderly population. By 2025, over 12% of India's population will be above 60 years (United Nations, 2021). However, despite this demographic shift, elderly individuals face increasing challenges, including financial instability, lack of healthcare, and declining social support.

Traditionally, joint families played a key role in elderly caregiving, ensuring financial and emotional security. However, modernization, urban migration, and nuclear family structures have led to a decline in familial caregiving (Kohli, 1996). Moreover, many elderly individuals remain unaware of government schemes designed for their welfare. This study examines the socio-psychological and economic challenges

faced by elderly individuals in Shankarpura village and explores the effectiveness of family support systems and government interventions.

KEY THEORETICAL FOUNDATION:

Biological Aging Theory – Aging is influenced by genetics and environmental factors, leading to physical and cognitive decline (Wear and Tear Theory).

Psychological Aging Theory – Aging affects cognition, personality, and emotions, aligning with Erikson's Integrity vs. Despair stage, where individuals reflect on life's meaning.

Sociological Theories of Aging:

Disengagement Theory – Elderly people gradually withdraw from society, leading to social isolation.

Activity Theory – Seniors who remain socially active experience better well-being.

Modernization Theory – Industrialization reduces the status and support of elderly individuals in society.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

"CARE AND SUPPORT FOR THE ELDERLY POPULATION IN INDIA" BY M. SIVAMURTHY AND R. WADA KANNAVAR, FROM A SURVEY OF THE AGED IN RURAL NORTH KAMATKA (INDIA), 2001. The care and support for the elderly population in India is becoming an important issue, is apparent from the growing number of the elderly in the population. By creating the National Policy for the Elderly and the National Council for the Elderly (NCOP) to monitor its implementation, the Government of India has demonstrated its concern in this area. Numerous programmes to care for and help the elderly have already been launched by the federal and provincial governments. Although in a limited capacity, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are also responsible for caring for the elderly, primarily in urban areas. But in India, especially in rural regions, it is the family that is discovered to be playing the most important role in this regard. In reality, this is what senior citizens appear to want as well. The respect that should be shown to elderly members of the family is emphasised by Indian culture. Because of this, efforts must be taken to increase family support for caring for the elderly population.

"AGED IN CHANGING SOCIAL SYSTEM; THEIR PROBLEMS, NEW DELHI." BY MOHANTY, R.P AND BEHURA, M.K (2005). Behera and Mohanty (2000) studied the elderly population in Bhubaneswar's urban regions. Their sons, daughters-in-law, and other family members discovered that the elderly were seen as a societal and financial burden. The elderly were seen as contributing to these societal and economic issues, which was viewed as more depressing than aging itself. Many of these issues, along with the high expense of living and an education system that is heavily influenced by the West, are attributed by the authors to the breakdown of the joint family system. The current situation causes social and emotional isolation in older individuals.

“SOCIAL SITUATION OF AGED IN INDIA, NEW DELHI” BY KOHLI, A. S (1996). He used information from census reports and a national sample survey organization to study the elderly as part of a funded research project by the Ministry of Welfare, Government of India. He looked into the demographic’s characteristics of the elderly, their socioeconomic and educational standing as indicated by different surveys, their state of health, and their socio-psychological adaptations to their new social environment.

"SOCIO - ECONOMIC FACTORS AND BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS OF THE ELDERLY POPULATION" BY YADAVA, YADAVA AND SHARMA (1996). examines the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the older population at the micro level. In this study, it was discovered that younger family members' attitudes and behaviours towards the elderly varied depending on the Old-age’s caste group, sex, and employment position. Compared to their male counterparts, elderly females typically depend on their families more. Additionally, the findings demonstrate that the family members' literacy and economic levels have a big impact on how they treat their elderly relatives.

“A STUDY OF FAMILY AND SOCIAL ASPECTS OF AGED, VADODARA CITY.” BY GHUGHARAWALA, G (1999). A team of ten researchers carried out the survey in Vadodara City, with a total of 665 respondents. They discovered that the primary cause of the issue is the generational wealth disparity within their family. They have a nice relationship with one son, but not with the other, so it has an impact. They discovered that the elderly became irate with their family members over irregularities in receiving food and medicine as well as in financial affairs. Their conflicts with family played a significant role in this. Thus, the aforementioned chapter represents an effort to present a comprehensive picture of the various foreign, national, and local studies conducted in the past.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY OBJECTIVES:

To understand the socio-psychological problems of elderly people living in the village.

To understand the family support system and emotional tie which they maintain with their family.

To examine the level of awareness among the government schemes and program formulated for them.

UNIVERSE, SAMPLE AND SAMPLING METHOD:

The universe of this study comprises elderly individuals aged 60 and above residing in Shankarpura village and Gram Panchayat, Vadodara District, Gujarat. This population was selected to understand the social, financial, and healthcare challenges faced by elderly individuals in rural India. A sample size of 47 elderly individuals was chosen using the purposive sampling method. This non-probability sampling technique was used to select participants based on specific criteria, such as age, financial dependency, health conditions, and family support. The study focused on elderly individuals who were either financially dependent on their families, lacked awareness of government schemes, or faced healthcare accessibility issues. Data was collected through structured surveys, interviews, and direct observations, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of their challenges and needs.

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION:

Data was collected through structured surveys, interviews, and direct observations, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of their challenges and needs.

FINDINGS:

The study conducted in Shankarpura village and Gram Panchayat, Vadodara District, Gujarat, reveals significant socio-economic, healthcare, and emotional challenges faced by elderly individuals. Family support for elderly individuals has declined, with 72% not receiving daily assistance from their family members. While 89% of respondents live with their sons and 11% with their daughters, only 43% are consulted in family decision-making, leaving 57% feeling excluded. Additionally, 27% receive regular help with daily activities, such as cooking, bathing, and medical needs, while 72% do not participate in social or community activities, leading to loneliness and emotional distress.

Financial dependency is a major concern, as 36% of elderly individuals rely solely on pensions, while 32% struggle to meet daily expenses due to insufficient pension funds and rising living costs. A significant 53% hesitate to ask for financial assistance from their family, fearing they will become a burden. Furthermore, 51% experience moderate to high levels of financial stress, even though 69% have a monthly income of ₹7,000 or more, indicating that financial hardships persist despite some sources of income.

Healthcare accessibility remains a pressing issue, with 53% of elderly individuals suffering from chronic illnesses such as hypertension, diabetes, arthritis, and respiratory diseases. However, only 36% receive regular medical check-ups and treatment, while 63% do not undergo regular medical care, leading to worsening health conditions. Lack of awareness about government healthcare schemes further exacerbates these issues, as 72% of elderly individuals are unaware of programs such as the National Programme for Health Care of the Elderly (NPHCE) and Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS). While 77% feel adequately cared for during illness, 23% report a lack of proper support and medical assistance.

Social exclusion and emotional distress are significant concerns, with 72% of elderly individuals not engaging in any social or community activities, leading to increased isolation and depression. Only 27% have regular social interactions outside their family, while 38% experience conflicts within their families due to caregiving and dependency issues. Additionally, 40% report emotional distress due to changes in family relationships, and 33% feel psychological stress due to financial constraints.

The study also highlights a lack of awareness and utilization of government schemes, as 72% of elderly individuals are unaware of welfare programs, preventing them from accessing essential financial and medical support. Among those who are aware, 32% received information from community skits or local events, while only 8% learned from newspapers. Many elderly individuals also face bureaucratic hurdles

when applying for pensions, as lack of documentation and inadequate assistance from local authorities make the process difficult.

CONCLUSION:

The study highlights the various socio-economic and healthcare challenges faced by elderly individuals in Shankarpura village and Gram Panchayat, Vadodara District, Gujarat. Findings indicate that financial insecurity, limited healthcare access, social isolation, and lack of awareness about government welfare schemes are major concerns affecting the elderly population. The decline of the joint family system has further weakened traditional caregiving structures, leaving many elderly individuals dependent yet neglected. While pension schemes and healthcare programs exist, bureaucratic hurdles and lack of awareness prevent many from accessing these benefits.

To ensure a dignified and secure life for the elderly, there is an urgent need for policy reforms, better financial assistance, improved healthcare facilities, and stronger community engagement. Increasing awareness of government schemes, promoting intergenerational support, and establishing elderly care programs can significantly improve the quality of life for aging populations. Addressing these issues requires collaboration between government agencies, NGOs, and society at large to create an inclusive and supportive environment for the elderly.

SUGGESTIONS:

To improve the well-being of elderly individuals, it is crucial to implement measures that address their financial, healthcare, social, and emotional needs. Strengthening family support systems by promoting intergenerational bonding and educating families about the importance of elder care can help reduce neglect and emotional distress among the elderly. Financial security must be enhanced by increasing pension benefits, providing financial aid, and introducing skill-based training programs that enable elderly individuals to remain financially independent. Healthcare accessibility needs to be improved by establishing mobile healthcare units, expanding geriatric care facilities, and ensuring free or subsidized medication for chronic illnesses.

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