

Socio-Economic Status of elderly women in Mother Old Age Home

DR.JONALI DAS

As ageing is a natural biological phenomenon for every human being and after being an aged the nature of behaviour of the people are going to change. Therefore, special care and attention is inevitable for this section of people. In general, family is the most vital non-formal social security institution for the elderly and most emotionally satisfying place to live in their later life. But owing to the modification and change of the family structure from joint to nuclear system, at both rural and urban levels, the responsibility and care for the elderly has reduced. Elders were better adjusted to the joint structure of the extended family in the past, with extended kins taking care and giving support. But, in present time, due to lack of such caring system, taking care of the elderly has become a serious problem.¹

In traditional period the parents of India had enjoyed a sense of honour, pride and authority. Indeed, with their vast experience they had been regarded as root of knowledge, wisdom and experience. But in contemporary period, the elderly community is treated as abandoned and most of the elderly are living a miserable life. Though both male elderly and female elderly are victim of abuse but cases of abuse against elderly women are quite difference and the major factor behind this is the economic condition of the women.

Currently protection and care of elderly is becoming a serious concern. As a result to the undermined patterns of family care and changing value system, provision for the care of elderly is increasingly being passed to the domain of institutionalized caring. Though the concept of Old Age Home is still new in Indian society but the roles of such institutions towards elderly are becoming significant.² It is a security provision for the elders not only in India but in Assam.

Help Age India an NGO, for the elderly has published its survey report "How India treats its Elderly" in the eve of the World Elder Abuse Awareness Day observed on 15th June 2017. Mathew Cherian, CEO of Help Age India, said that elder abuse is a sensitive topic. Over the past few years the NGO have been studying and researching elder abuse within the closed doors of one's home but in this year they have extended their area of study to public space also. The report brings the fact that abuse against senior citizens is increasing in huge amount not only in other part of India but in Assam also. According to the Report, Guwahati is the third highest ranked in elder abuse with the IT City Bangalore topping the list. Total 59% elders in Guwahati have revealed that they face abuse behaviour while in Bangalore 70% of senior citizens complained or being abused and Hyderabad is followed by Bangalore with 60%. Manjira Khurana, the Country Head Communication and Advocacy of Help Age India told that they covered 19 cities and 53% of the 4,615(2,377 male and 2,238 females) elders admitted to feeling discriminated.³

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH STUDY:

1. To examine the state of security of the elderly women in Assam.
2. To examine the socio-economic and health status of the aged women in Assam.

HYPOTHESIS

1. Socio- Economic status is the main factors for elderly shifting to Old Age Home.
2. Female Elderly are more vulnerable than male elderly.

METHODOLOGY TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION

Both the primary and secondary data are employed for the purpose of collecting data.

¹ Sankardass,M.K.2004." Growing Old in India: Voices Reveal", in Ashis, Bose and M.K. Sankardass(eds.)Growing old in India: Voices Reveal, Statistics Speak. New Delhi: B.R. Publishing Corporation

² *ibid*

³ The Times of India, Indian Express, The Shillong Times, 15 June,2017

PRIMARY SOURCES

Primary data is original data collected for a specific research goal. Primary data collection method includes observation, both face to face interviews and telephonic interviews and surveys. Semi-structured interview scheduled to tap the subjective perception of the residents of the Homes in Kamrup Metro District is taken. There were two sets of interview schedule; one for the organization means the Old Age Homes and other for the elderly respondents. The semi-structured interview schedule has both open and close ended questions.

SECONDARY DATA

Secondary sources include government reports, books and journals, news papers, some previous works related to this area etc.

SAMPLING:

Among the Old Age Homes existing in Kamrup Metro District, Mother Old Age Home is taken for study. All the residents of this Old Age Homes are taken as sample, however, some of the elderly inmates have lost their memory and some are patients of Alzheimer and dementia and they were not able to give interview. Data of these inmates were taken from the authority of the Homes.

❖ MOTHER OLD AGE HOME

Mother Old Age Home a Unit of Manalisha Society was established in 2009 and started serving the aged people since 21st of June, 2012. There are two types of provisions in this Old Age Home. First type is the free type. In this type the destitute people who have no one else to take care of are kept and all the facilities like shelter ,food, clothing, medical care etc. are given at free of cost. The second type is the paid type and in this provision the inmates who are willing to reside here have to give a fixed amount of fee per month.

➤ ELIGIBILITY FOR ADMISSION

- Persons who have none to look after them in their old age are eligible to apply and stay in the 'Mother Old Age Home'.
- For admission into the Home applications will be entertained from those candidates only who have attained the age of 60 years for male However and 55 years for female or above. However, the management of the Home reserves the right to relax this rule in special circumstances.
- Selected candidates for admission into the Home must be free from all liabilities and obligations whatsoever towards any relatives or friends.

➤ FOOD

- Both vegetarian and non vegetarian meals will be supplied as per the decision of the management from the common kitchen. No residents can claim a certain type of meal as a matter of right.
- The Home will provide the morning tea, breakfast, lunch, evening tea and dinner.
- Candidates having any allergic to any food may inform to the management.

➤ CODE OF CONDUCT

- Every resident has to abide by the rules of punctuality and discipline of the Home.
- All residents must do their best to live in peace and harmony.
- All residents are strictly prohibited in taking of alcohol, cigarette or any prohibited drugs etc. in the Home premises.
- If any resident, at any time after admission wants to leave the Home he/she has liberty to do so. In that event he will not be refund of his admission fee.
- Visitors may meet the residents in the visitor's room during visiting hours only. No visitors are allowed to stay at night in the Home.
- No residents are allowed to go out of the Home without any reasonable cause and without the prior consent of the management. Moreover, before going out the resident shall make entry regarding time, date and purpose of going outside in the register and again after their return.
- In the event of any untoward incident or if anything happens to the resident, such as accident, health related or death, the management authority is not responsible in any case.

➤ **GRIEVANCE**

- In case of any genuine grievance the residents may bring it before the management of the Home in writing.
- Under no circumstances shall the residents take the law in their own hand for redressed of their grievance.

➤ **MEDICAL CARE/ TREATMENT**

Mother Old Age Home will bear the expenses of medicines of casual illness such as fever, cough, cold, casual pains and will be purely on the discretion of doctor on the panel of society.

- Long running medicines for the disease such as Blood Pressure, sugar, Heart Problems, Migraine etc. shall be arranged by the resident at his her own expense. Otherwise who has none to look after him /she, the Home will bear all expenditure for the medical cost.
- Weekly health check-up is done by qualified Doctor of the Home. In case if serious illness or accident the resident will be hospitalised in Govt.hospital,Guwahati Medical College & Hospital only and intimation will be passed to close relations of the resident whose details have been provided by him/her in the application form, as early as possible after hospitalisation. If the relatives or guarantor of the resident want to shift the resident for treatment to private hospital, they can do so on their expense. For emergencies a nearby doctor made available.

➤ **DEATH AND FUNERAL**

Regarding death of a resident, the authority of the home tries to contact his/her relatives as soon as possible. In case the relative fails to satisfactorily respond in a timely manner or fails to take possession of the boy within ten hours of the demise, the funeral rites is performed by the Home in such a manner as may be deemed appropriate. Even in the event of failure to contact the relative due to any reason what so ever beyond the control of the Home, the above action is taken as far as possible only after ten hours.

➤ **RECREATION AND ENTERTAINMENT**

- Library, Television set with cable connection, Screening of Film shows, Compute, Indoor Games, Other activities connected with physical/ mental recreation will be organised during the months like seminars, cultural programmes etc.
- Local outing for residents is arranged regularly, Outstation travel is arranged, Writing or other artistic skills among the residents are encouraged, publishing magazine with contribution from the residents.
- Celebration of Special Days like Birthday of residents, International day of older persons, Foundation Day of the Old Age Home, independence Day, Republic Day, Diwali, Bihu,Puja,Eid, Christmas, Janmastami, Birthday of Mother Teresa etc.

➤ **SOCIAL HOUR**

Any NGO,School,College Students and other groups may visit the home and entertain the old inhabitants with songs, dances and discussions. Their relatives and other outside visitors may also give them company, so that they may not feel ever lonely.

➤ **AWARD FUNCTION**

Every year the Home organises award Function Ceremony in the month of October-November. On this occasion the respected donors/contributors are being awarded by the Home for their distinguished services to Mother Old Age Home and to society as a whole.

I. DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS OF RESIDENTS OF MOTHER OLD AGE HOMES IN KAMRUP METRO DISTRICT

As 60 is determined as the retirement age or beginning of the old age hence persons attaining the age 60 or above were included here. From the total 28 of elderly, number of elderly of the age group of 80 years and above is higher than other age group and number of female elderly is much higher than male elderly and most of them are belongs to rural area. Though it is said that people living in city are mostly self

centric but here we can see that elderly coming from rural areas are outnumbered and only 3 male are there in that Home.

TABLE: I

Mother Old Age Home	
60-69	8
70-79	6
80 and above	14
Sex	
Male	3
Female	25
Total	28
Place of Residents	
Rural	14
Urban	9
Unknown	3

SOCIAL STATUS OF THE ELDERLY RESIDENTS OF OLD AGE HOMES IN ASSAM

The well being of elderly depends largely on certain socio-economic condition such as: literacy, marital status and state of economic independence. Socio-Economic developments affect vital rates over a time period and bring about the phenomenon of demographic transition. Assam is that state of North East, with widely heterogeneous population in terms of socio –cultural and economic characteristics like literacy, employment, health, morbidity rates and social amenities. Old age and wisdom are considered synonymous in the traditional culture. Old age is determined by the cultural norms prevailing in society. In the Indian society, marriage of one's children, particularly of a son, heralds the beginning of old age (Sati, P.N,1996)¹. In most of the developed world, population ageing was a gradual process of steady socio-economic growth. Income is the most widely used measure of socio-economic status of elderly.

II. MARITAL STATUS OF THE INMATES

TABLE: II**Marital Status of Residents of Old Home of Assam**

Old Age Home	
Unmarried	10
Married	2
Widow/Widower	15(widower2, widow 13)
Divorced/Separated	0
Unknown	1

From the total 28 inmates, unmarried women and widows are higher than married women and widower. Total 10 numbers of unmarried elderly are there and 15 numbers of elderly widow. Only 2 married women are there. Although the numbers of unmarried women are higher than other but the problems of them are same.

TABLE: III
Number of Children and Married Children of the Residents

	Mother Old Age Home A unit of Manalisha Society
None	18
One	2(Male 2)
Two	2(Male2,Female2)
Three	1(Male 2,Female1)
Four	2(Male 2,Female6)
Four and Above	1(Male 6, Female 4)
Unknown	1
Step Children	1(Male 2)
Number of Married Children by Sex	
None	18
One	3(Son 1, Daughter1)
Two	3(Son 3, Daughter 4)
Three	0
Four	2(Son 2, Daughter 6)
Four and Above	1(Son 6, Daughter 4)
Unknown	1
Step Children	1(son2)

Living situation of elderly people are basically depends on their dependent as in the later part of life due to fragile health and other problems they have to depend on others and generally people depends on their son and daughter. But here we can see that total 18 numbers of elderly don't have children. So their problems are to some extent different from the elderly having children. Total 8 inmates have children and one have step children. Many of them have more than two children and numbers of married children are 29 and their behaviors towards their parents are not satisfactory.

II.4 ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE ELDERLY INMATES

Financial hardship is a growing and difficult problem of the elderly in all parts of India and Assam is not exceptional from this curse. The economic status of the older persons is linked with the overall economic status of its general population. Economic Security during the working years provides an opportunity for its continuation into later years through appropriate investment. In many countries, especially in developing countries, the elderly persons find themselves without adequate financial assets and other resources to fulfil their basic needs in the absence of a guaranteed old-age income. A large percentage of people in India also working in the informal sector, where the work merely earns enough income to meet the basic needs of life , many people retire from income-earning work with insufficient savings and it effects the later life of elderly people for fulfilling their needs. In the absence of any form of pensions or personal savings, such individuals are often dependent on their family members who themselves often times live in poverty, which significantly limits the level of support they can afford to the elderly in the family. Lack of a regular source of income or personal savings subjects many elderly persons to a situation of extreme economic hardship and unable to meet basic needs for a dignified life. As a consequence, elderly persons in many cases are forced to work in their later life in order to survive and meet the basic needs though it is beyond their physical capacity.

Economic conditions of the elderly of Assam are not in a good position. Elderly, those living in the Old Age Homes are not entitled with sound economy. Most of them were live a life of economic hardship as some of them were engaged in unorganised sector or some of them were unemployed.

Employment	
	Mother Old Age Home A unit of Manalisha Society
Organised Sector	4
Unorganised Sector	7
Unemployed	11
Unknown	6
Last Designation	
Govt Official	1
Clerical or lower level in Govt. Sector	1
Private Sector	3
Small Businessman	0
School Teacher	3
Domestic Helper	1
Daily Wage Earner	4
Housewife	12
Unknown	3

Result and Discussion

From the above analysis it becomes clear that economic factor has a great impact on the women elderly. Most of the women elderly are unemployed and they have to have depended on others specially, on their dependents for their livelihood. Lacking of economic security sometimes push them to live a horrible life within their family though it is thought that family is the most secure place for everyone. But here we can see that all the 28 inmates have left their home. Some of them are forced to leave their home and some have willingly abandoned their home and all of them revealed the truth about the abuse behaviour of their near one.

REFERENCES

1. Sankardass,M.K.2004.” Growing Old in India: Voices Reveal”, in Ashis, Bose and M.K. Sankardass(eds.)Growing old in India: Voices Reveal, Statistics Speak. New Delhi: B.R. Publishing Corporation
2. The Times of India, Indian Express, The Shillong Times, 15 June,2017