



# SENIOR CITIZEN LIFE IN URBAN HOMES AND OLD AGE HOMES

( A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY IN MYSURU CITY)

Dr.HAMSAVENI.S

Associate Professor, Dept. of Sociology

Sri.HONNADEVI GFGC, DANDINASHIVARA, TUMKUR District.

## ABSTRACT

**KEYWORDS:** 1) Senior Citizen 2) Urban Families 3) Old Age Home

Birth and death are the two faces of the same coin. Just as every individual is born in this world as a stranger, he grows up and passes through the stages of socialization such as infancy, childhood, youthhood, adulthood and then skips to old age which is watched as an undesirable, inescapable and irreversibly biological problem-ridden stage of life that is compelled to pass through. Thus, ageing is a natural process and an incurable disease.

Marriage aims at producing children and it is the responsibility of every parent to shape their children into productive beings. In doing so, majority of parents forsake their precious age and time and save money for their children's betterment. It is the dream of every parents to give the best qualitative and quantitative life for their children.

### **BUT WHAT ARE THEY GETTING BACK?**

The present paper focuses my study in Mysuru city, carefully selected 100 senior citizens in the age group of 65-80 giving equal weightage to both gender, selected 50 senior citizens from urban homes and 50 from old age homes in Mysuru urban area. Furthermore, the researcher has collected primary data by using interview schedule, direct observation, partial participatory method, and snow ball method also. Secondary data was also collected through books, and internet as well. This study is both descriptive and explanatory in nature. This paper focuses on these challenges, government policies and programmers and the positive steps to overcome these challenges mentally, physically and financially.

Findings: It was found that elder's views and experiences varied between family and institutions. Elders in families were abused badly, but still they preferred to be with their kin whereas senior citizens at old age homes repented for being alive inspite of ups and downs.

**INTRODUCTION:**

“THE YOUNG HAVE ASPIRATIONS THAT NEVER COME TO PASS, THE OLD HAVE REMINISCENCES OF WHAT NEVER HAPPENED”-H.K.MUNRO.A

HOME is a place where all crave to live and this is a permanent place where we find our family members, a bunch of members comprising of grand-parents, parents and siblings. It is not a cement building made of four walls but a family fabric where we find people being knit together by blood and marriage relations, everyone living under the same roof, caring and sharing life experiences, growing up as responsible citizens. Home is a place where everyone finds their comfort zone. The elders in the family be it a joint family or a nuclear family, play an important role in molding their younger ones.

India is a land of villages. Before this, man led a nomadic life which was not a secured one. He used to move from one place to another in search of food. He used to live in forests and had to gather fruits and nuts for his food, sometimes hunting also. In the process of hunting, the chances for his survival was meager. Due to all these reasons, he had no settled life and for the sake of his food wandering for survival was inevitable.

However, he learnt the art of growing crops and when the crops came out successfully, the problem of finding food was solved and this assured him to live and settle in one place. Slowly Agriculture became the predominant occupation here and hence we find joint family system. Agriculture calls in for more people to work on land and these joint families have thus been a cropping center for population. Majority of our Indian population are concentrated in rural areas and many in the past days owned land. To take care of this land they produced more children and land had been the basic factor for mans settled living

Man is born and brought up in a family. All human being is born as biological organisms and so was the case of man also. It was in this family that he received the age-old cultures, traditions, practices and rituals. People were knit together with emotional bond, ideals and values Throughout he had the elders in the family who guided him at every step and all the age-old practices were deemed as important for his well-being. He inculcated all these from childhood and he was made to relish all these as well. All the traditions, customs, practices etc were well defined and he followed them automatically. Traditional agricultural rural family was thus very important and the contributions of the senior citizens goes beyond explanation. The elders taught the youngsters the way of life and that was a period where the rural society wad upheld with extreme dignity. Agriculture bound all the family members together and property was jointly owned. The elders were treated with high respect by the youngsters and these elders, by sharing their age experience guided the younger generation, and hence in those days we don't see much of social problems like poverty, unemployment, elders abuse etc.,...With the fast marching society, a number of changes like industrialization , urbanization, westernization, modern education, development of science and technology, and other factors have really stepped into the rural household and have shaken the basic root of rural family.

**IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY:-**

The population of our country is fast progressing and successfully occupies the second place at global world. The current population of India is 1,399,791,068 as on December 18, based on world meter. Uttar Pradesh is most populous state in Indi. India's population consists of a considerable proportion of elderly people and 3.4% of those above the age of 45 years live alone. Nearly 5.7% of the country's senior citizens live on their own without the support of family or friends. According to the National Statistical Office, Elderly in India as per 2021 report, elderly population in India is 138 million as on 2021 and it is projected that the elderly population may touch 194million in 2031, an increase of 41% over a decade.

The above statistics prompted me to make a comparative study of ageing people at home and at old-age homes. A closer look at these homes, in fact, revealed that every home is unique. Hence, I have chosen 50 individuals (25 men and 25 women) living in urban homes/families and 50 senior citizens from old-age homes. (25 men and 25 women) This selection was based on random sampling. Before I could carry on my study, I told appointment from the Institutional heads, assured that my study was academic, then I met the urban household members, assured them that my attempt was academic and for both of them told that their co-operation in this regard would be beneficial for scientific study. I got the permission from all. For the above study, I selected 1 modern old-age home (Private) and 2 NGO'S. Primary data was collected through partial participant observation and interview schedule. To locate these institutions, snow-ball method helped me. A bunch of 25 questions were asked and their responses were noted down.

#### **HYPOTHESIS:-**

- 1) The respondents selected are from middle class families.
- 2) Many of them are more visible in the urban society where there are better civic facilities and better employment opportunities like industries, job opportunities, urban areas and better educational and medical facilities.
- 3) Children moving out of families for job opportunities, higher studies and marriages might have been a prominent reason for the present situations of my respondents.
- 4) Many of them whose health conditions are still good may prefer to stay on their own and many in old-age homes might have been compelled to stay there by their own people and a few might have been finding happiness here.
- 5) Many senior citizens at urban homes get some moral and financial support either from their pension or relatives, hence make a daring effort to live independently.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- 1) To understand the role of urban family in the modern set -up although old-age homes are for sure a definite place for all to live in.
- 2) To understand the different old-age homes, both their nature qualitatively and quantitatively throwing light on both government and non-government institutions.
- 3) Visualize the facilities provided to the elderly ones in both paid and non-paid institutions.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:** - For the purpose of qualitative, explanatory, explorative and descriptive method, 100 respondents falling into the ageing category of 60-80 years were taken for my study, 50 from urban houses, 50 from old-age homes. All women were taken up for this purpose.

**RESEARCH DESIGN:** - For the purpose of qualitative, explanatory, explorative and descriptive method, 100 respondents falling into the ageing category of 60-80 years were taken for my study, 50 from urban houses, 50 from old-age homes. All were taken up for this purpose. They were chosen up by random and purposive sampling. An interview schedule was prepared both to the management and the respondents and my study had also followed snow-ball method, sometimes face-to-face interview was also conducted.

- a) **SAMPLING-** For my research purpose, I have picked up 50 senior citizens living in urban areas and who are mainly picked up from my relatives, friends and also my nearby neighbors. These respondents were known to me for few years and I made this study taking permission both from their family members and respondents as well. I told them that this study was not for academic purpose and their names, address will be kept confidential. Getting this number of respondents was difficult as I had to balance both my professional work along with this. Coming to the institutions, I approached one which is a government one and another, a non-government one. I met the management people, told the aim of my study. They permitted me to visit their institutions on Sundays because the other days after my professional job, in evening hours, questions them was not okay. I got many

respondents here and many were ready to talk, but however keeping some para-meters in my mind, which should coincide with urban residents, I carefully chose only 50 here also.

- b) **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE:** Interview scheduled was prepared separately for management people and one for respondents. Management people in this schedule was asked about their institution details such as when it began, how and who started it and why they started this institution. Initial number and how they progressed, what were the facilities then and now, the present number of inmates and their future plans. Coming to the urban senior residents, 25 questions were prepared and the same question was asked to both the respondents such as the urban old citizens and the inmates at old-age home. For both of them. I assured that their answers was for study purpose and even the family members were given a chance to glance at these questions. In this way, my study ran smoothly without hurting anyone.
- c) **SNOW-BALL METHOD:-** This method was used in my study to locate the old-age homes as well as the respondents in urban homes through friends and relatives.

#### SOURCES OF DATA COLLECTION:

Primary source of information was collected from the respondents and management by using instrumentations that is schedule interview, purposive and partial participation and Secondary source of data was collected through books, journals and internet.

#### QUESTIONS AND FINDINGS:

Q.No.		Ageing parents at home		Ageing parents at old-age homes	
1)	AGE	60-70	70-80	60-70	70-80
		38	12	38	12

**Q. 1** shows that out of 50 selected elders, 38 fall under the age-group of 60-70 in urban home, whereas 12 come under the age group of 70-80. The same statistics holds good for old -age home also.

Q.No.2	AGEING SENIORS CITIZENS AT HOME			AGEING SENIORS AT OLD-AGE HOME		
RELIGION	HINDUS	CHRISTIANS	MUSLIMS	HINDUS	CHRISTIANS	MUSLIMS
TOTAL	20	18	12	24	21	5

**Q.No.2** shows that in urban home, the senior The above figure shows that in urban home, the senior citizens belonging to Hindu religion were 20, Christians were 18 and 12 were Muslims, whereas in old-age home, it was 24 hindus, 21 christians and 5 Muslims.

Q.No.3	SENIORS AT URBAN HOMES					SENIORS AT OLD-AGE HOMES				
Education	Primary	Secondary	PUC	Diploma	Degree	Primary	Secondary	PUC	Diploma	Degree
	21	17	07	02	03	18	12	08	06	06

**Q.No.3** shows that out of 50 selected respondents from urban houses, 21 had primary education, 17 secondary, 07 PUC, 02 Diploma and 03 Degree whereas the respondents in the old-age homes, 18 had primary education, 12 secondary, 08 PUC, 06 Diploma and 06 Degree.

Q.No.4	SENIOR CITIZENS AT HOME				SENIOR CITIZENS AT OLD-AGE HOMES			
Occupation	Business	Private	Govt.Employee	No answer	Business	Private	Govt.Employee	No answer
Total	11	26	08	05	16	18	10	06

**Q.No.4** tells us the idea that 05 respondents did not reveal their occupation in urban families and the same 06 members kept quite in old-age homes with regard to occupation. 08 govt. employees, 26 private employees and 11 in business were the occupation revealed in urban homes. Coming to old-age homes, we find that 16 were in business zone, 18 private and 10 were govt. employees.

Q.No.5	Seniors in URBAN HOMES				Seniors in old-age homes			
Marital Status	Unmarried	Married	Widow	Divorce	Unmarried	Married	widow	Divorce
Total	03	24	21	02	08	29	10	03

**Q.No. 5** shows that out of 50 in urban families. 03 were unmarried, 24 married, 21 widows and 02 divorced. Coming to old-age homes, out of 50 respondents, 08 were unmarried, 29 married, 10 widows and 03 were divorced and 03 were divorced

**TABLE-2**

		SENIORS IN URBAN HOMES			SENIORS IN OLD-AGE HOMES		
7)	SPOUSE-STRENGTH	ALWAYS	SOME-TIMES	NEVER	ALWAYS	SOME-TIMES	NEVER
	TOTAL	19	13	18	28	12	10
8)	CHILDREN	SONS	DAUGHTERS	SONS	DAUGHTERS		
	TOTAL	33	17	36	14		

9)	Children Doing?	Studyin g	Working	Nothing	Studying	Working	Nothing		
		03	38	09	05	33	12		
10	Relationship	Very good	Good	Bad	Very good	Good	Bad		
		13	18	19	07	17	26		
11	Reasons for staying away	JOB	MARRIED	NON- ADJUSTMENT	JOB	MARRIED	NON- ADJUSTMENT		
		08	06	36	18	13	19		
12	Contribution to family	Monthly	Yearly	Not at all	Monthly	Yearly	Not at all		
		28	17	05	--	---	----		
13	How do you manage?	Pension	Property	Children	No help	Pension	Property	Children	No help
		14	19	12	05	08	11	13	18

Table 2 is self-explanatory. Seniors at home replied positively to their spouse strength. 19 always felt that their strength, 13 sometimes and 18 felt nothing. 33 Seniors had sons and 17 daughters, 3 children were studying, 38 working, 9 did not reply. Coming to their relationships 13 said their son and Daughter-in-law had very good relationship with them, 18 good and 19 bad. Moving on to the reason as to why they were staying away- 8 cited the reason of job, 06 due to marriage they moved away and 36 said that they could not cope up. Sliding on to the next question on contribution, 28 had monthly help from pension and children, 17 said yearly contribution they got and 05 no response. Regarding their management, 14 got pension, 19 had property, 12 from their children and 5 no response.

Posing the same questions to seniors at old-age home, 28 always felt that spouse was their strength, 12 sometimes felt and 10 never felt at all. 36 seniors had sons and 14 daughters, 05 were studying, 33 working, 12 did nothing. Coming to son and daughter-in-law relationship, 07 said it was very good, 17 good and 26 in bad and ruptured stage. Contribution part is nil, and coming to the question on management, 8 got pension, 11 had property and 13 from children, 18 had no financial support at all from their family.

(Findings from 14-25 are in statement forms)

14) Answering to the question on Health condition- the respondents from urban families answered that out of 50, 14 said that their health was very good, 23 good, 04 fair and 09 worst whereas the inmates at old-age home said out of 50, 12 were very good, 17 good, 04 fair and 17 in worst situation.

15) Who takes care when you are ill? For this 35 said their family members, 13 relatives and 02 did not respond -this is from urban family response whereas from old-age home, 11 family members, 27 inmates and 12 no response.

16) Social contact- Urban family seniors said out of 50, 33 were in very good, 09 sometimes, 08 rarely have social contact whereas in old-age homes, 19 were sometimes in social contact, 24 rarely and 07 did not respond at all.

17) Differences of opinion- 11 said that they argued, 08 anger, 10 quite, 31 strike -this is from urban family response but there was no response for any of these questions at all.

18) Coming to reaction- 25 were getting scolding, 08 abused and 17 neglected in urban families, coming to old-age home, seniors here said that only 23 neglected.

19) How do you feel? Senior citizens from urban family replied that 18 felt very sad, 23 depressed and 09 sad, whereas seniors from the other end said nothing to this question.

20) How do you cope up? 13 were convinced and 37 forget was the response from urban families whereas inmates from the old-age home, 2 said that they get convinced and 48 forget.

21) Regarding their worry about their future, the answer from urban home residents were- some 15 were worried about shelter, 18 health worries, 11 had no worries at all and 6 residents had some other issues which they did not disclose, whereas coming to the inmates 18 had shelter problem, 8 health issues, 23 had no problem and 1 did not tell anything at all.

22) What good things would you like to share? For this 11 expressed that now they had no worry to work like washing, compulsory cooking etc., 12 had no financial issue, 15 no responsibility of home management and 12 said that family would take care, whereas the inmates responses were- 5 had no work issue, 11 had no finance issue, 1 had no home management issue and 33 were sure that the organization would take care of them.

23) What bad thing would you like to share? For this the residents out of 50, 16 said they missed their favorite's, 12 missed their outings, 23 freedom and 9 did not answer, but the inmates here said out of 50, 2 missed their favorites, 2 outings, 28 freedom and 18 did not answer.

24) Your last desire? This was a heart-touching question, but the residents everyone felt that and wanted their children to be with them during their last days and last journey. Coming to the inmates, nearly 32 said they are waiting for their death, 11 had tears in their eyes and 7 said they should never be born again.

25) Your message to the youngsters- Majority of the residents only said that the younger generation should never forget the many sacrifices that the elders do for their well-being, and coming to the in-mates, many kept mum and some said that children should be responsible not only in work-front but also in taking care of elders.

#### **HINDERANCES:-**

- Senior citizens should mentally get prepared for their future like being ready to enter their evening stage of life.
- They should financially secure themselves as they secure their children's future.
- Everyday, they should save time for themselves for keeping up mental and physical health.
- Other than their children and relatives, they should learn to cope up with others also.
- Their attachment for worldly life and craving for their favorite food and outings should slide down gradually.
- They should be aware of government policies and programs for the aged and invest money for their future.
- They should be confident that at least there are old-age homes for them to live, hence attempting suicide in absence of care should be struck off their mind.
- The government and non-government institutions are putting up their best to give their inmates a comfort level. This kind in terms of material things, they have successfully done. But no one can give the love and affection of their blood ones, and it is here that the institutions are facing a setback.

**SUGGESTIONS:**

- More efforts and awareness should be created among the inmates to build up themselves to survive in this competitive world.
- Instead of staying in a house and undergoing abuses, it is wise that the elders play their future and select the old-age homes even before they reach this stage.
- Self-confidence should be built up strongly.
- Health insurance should be made compulsory.
- Old-age pension, widow pension, and dis-abled pension should also increase.
- Mind-games should be encouraged so that the elders could be engaged and free from Alzheimer diseases.
- Media should play an active part here.
- Institutional quality should be enhanced as per the changing times.
- Government grants and facilities should be improved and enhanced.
- Children whose parents are living in old-age homes should be punished if they neglect and fail to visit them and they should be given extra bonus if they care for them.
- A certain amount from children salary should be deducted for their parents' welfare if they are employed.
- A compulsory visit by all students at higher level should be made compulsorily so that the students imbibe the culture of caring the older ones and inculcate the habit of social service both in kind and cash.

**CONCLUSION:**

India is a vast and fast developing country and all the individuals are also marching faster. Modern life is based on achievement rather than a belief in fate or karma. Every man practically should think that if he wants to lead a luxury life, then he has to work hard and this he has learnt and shown in his children's upbringing. However, he should further think one step ahead also for his old-age. Self-striving, self-saving for his own good is a mature way of living. He should realize that in today's race of life, no one has time for anyone, hence instead of playing blaming games, or having confidence on others, he should prepare himself mentally to live either alone or should be ready to lead a life in old-age homes. If the future demands his stay for the latter one, he should welcome it, and feel proud that at least there are institutions of such kind for his last life.

On the other hand, the present children should realize that what they are now is only because of their parents sacrifice of their entire life. All parents are proud if children come up in their lives and like this only all children when they grow up and become bread earners, they should never forget their elders and the culture of seeing elders as old-furniture should end. Although they are away from parents may be out of the country, still when the situation permits, they should make video calls, be constantly in touch with the family members, take maximum care of them, visit them frequently, talk to them and stand by them mentally and morally support them. Our land though known for rich culture and tradition, should also be known as a land of love and affection.