

Problems Faced By Old Age People in Recent Indian Family System

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Abstract

The paper highlights the Indian family system and the status of old age persons therein. The significance of the age-old family system of the country has been viewed, the significance, the status and the inherent concern for all family member has been underlined. The demographic and social perspectives have been highlighted. A concern for old age persons of the family has been underlined, the necessity for the welfare of entire population of an area, including old persons has been called for. The modern prescriptive mode has also been called for.

Keywords: Elderly, Ageing index, Quality of life, Questionnaires, Evaluation. Health impacts, *Ashrams* (Old People Homes)

Introduction

A senior citizen in India is an individual resident between age group of 60 to 80 years or more. This segment of population plays a key role in the evolution, persistence and the future of the family concerned. It is due to the patronage provided from birth to marriage and upbringing of family of the younger lot.

The share of population over the age of 60 is projected to increase from 8 per cent to nearly 20 per cent in 2050. Fulfilling needs for services and social protection for senior citizens, protection of their rights and enabling them to contribute in the development process are priorities for India.

Indian family system is a great institution. It may be seen that many of the traditions, customs and life style are all products of the family system. The family represents a tradition and custom of principles of life and death, of upbringing, nurturing and bringing on the rails of life of younger members of the family. Its bonds are multifarious. Old age generation represents a continuum of parental heritage as well heritage of age old customs and multifarious intra-family, inter-family and extra family human relations.

The Indian family system marks a continuum. Old age persons continue to rule the hearts of younger generations through love. Gita says 'the only way you can conquer me is through love and there I am gladly conquered'. It is this dictum which old age persons inherit and transmit through younger generations. Family system continues with adjustment and amendment.

It is the senior citizens who have given birth, nurtured and enabled the younger generation to look after themselves, develop, make family, produce children, take care of their parents and carry on the rail of human life on the earth. All members of a family are in line of becoming old in due course. That is why there is a great significance of old age persons in Indian family system. Every member of a family is destined to be mature and old in due course of time.

Thus the game of ageing is not a snake and ladder game where you may rise and fall. The human life and family systems has a continuum of time and people both, who keep on coming and going. Lucky are those who attain old age and highlight the path of life of the coming generation.

Scope and Limitations

The concern and disquiet over problems faced by old age persons in modern Indian family system leads to the following dominant demographic chains that steer the growing share of old age persons in the country :

1. Status of Infant mortality – The infant mortality ratio in the country has gone down from 9.7/1000 in 1981 to 1.4/1000 in 2019 due to advances in child care during and at birth.

2. The age of marriage among women in the country is continuously rising. It was 22.1 in 2017 and reached to 22.3 in 2018.
3. The trend of dipping fertility rate of population. The fertility rate was 4.5 in 1981 and 2.3 in 1991. It is mostly be due to awareness and easy reach of contraceptives among women in child bearing age,
4. The overall reduction in infant mortality. The mortality rate among infants was 43 in 2011 and 28.3 in 2019.
5. The rise in chances of life is the result of availability and reach of health care system in the country, nutritious meals, medicines and over all awareness.

There may be variations among rural and urban areas but the overall trend shows a positive trend for survival of persons in India leading to rise of number of old persons in the population.

Aim of the Study

1. To understand the problem faced by old age people
2. To study the impact of modernity on old age people.

The Recent Indian Family System

The family system in India is an age-old legacy of patriarchy, large size, collectivism, ruled by the eldest male (Head) leading to wearing down of individual identity of other family members except the Head. Indian society initially was collectivistic and promoted social cohesion and interdependence. The decision making power lied exclusively with the eldest male member of the family. The family size was large. The members were blood relations, had common property. The family members may represent three or four generations with mutual moral obligations, rights and duties. The family at that time was usually a joint family in which brothers, uncles, cousins, nephews, relations etc. Further in addition to the blood relations the ancient Indian family also included adopted children, servants, etc.

With the introduction of industrialization and consequent urbanization the phenomena of rural-urban migration set in, initiating rural-urban migration search of gainful employment in town and cities from rural areas.

However, the society has changed. One of the most significant alterations being the disintegration of the joint family and the rise of nuclear and extended family system. The family gradually shifted from patriarchic system to patriarch-local household. Individual autonomy was initiated lowering the status of the Head of family. The extent of autonomy and democracy may vary by region, community and caste etc. The right to education of girl child with freedom to seek employment started emerging in later part of the last century, now at par with male child. Parents were left behind the job seeker members of the family. Presently, it is rather a rule than exception. The collectivistic nature of Indian society is rather gone. We may call this situation as recent family system in India.

Another character is that the joint family system is no more but has not been exclusively replaced by nuclear system. It is a kind of nuclear household continuing to exist as constituent of joint family system.

The Status of Old Age Persons in Recent Family System in India

According to Population Census 2011 there are nearly 104 million elderly persons (aged 60 years or above) in India; 53 million females and 51 million males. A report released by the United Nations Population Fund and *Help Age India* suggests that the number of elderly persons is expected to grow to 173 million by 2026.

1. Both the share and size of elderly population is increasing over time. From 5.6% in 1961 the proportion has increased to 8.6% in 2011 . For males it was marginally lower at 8.2%, while for females it was 9.0%.
2. The rural-urban composition of old age persons shows that 71% of elderly population resides in rural areas and 29 % in urban areas.
3. So far as state wise data on elderly population is concerned it may be noted that Kerala has the highest proportion of old age people (12.6 per cent) followed by Goa (11.2 per cent) and Tamil Nadu (10.4 per cent) as per Census 2011. It may be noted that the least proportion is in Dadra & Nagar Haveli (4.0 per cent). Arunachal Pradesh (4.6 per cent) and Daman & Diu and Meghalaya (both 4.7 per cent each) come next.

Age Distribution 2011 - 2019

The general age distribution of India from 2011 to 2019: In 2019, about 26.62 percent of the Indian population fell into the 0-14 year category, 67 percent into the 15-64 age group and 6.38 percent were over 65 years of age.

It shows that the number of elderly persons is growing.

Problems Faced by Old Age Persons in Recent Indian Family System

It has already been mentioned that the age-old family system in India is based on collectivism. The modern era is witnessing the rise of nuclear and extended family system. The reason is shifting of younger couples to different cities and towns for employment and other jobs. In such cases old age parents have to depend on remaining members in the family. This leads to diminishing care and attention that was normally given to them in collective family.

Lack of personal attention and care due to decreasing number of younger members of the family.

Decline in financial support because of reduction of number of earning members.

Another disadvantage of the changing family system in recent India is that the out migration of some members of the family for reasons stated earlier reduces the attention to old age persons in emergency. There are now lesser hands to give a helping hand to the aged members in case the later need so.

Reduction of escorts and company giving members of the family due to out migration of component units of family in search of jobs etc.

A decrease in social surroundings of children, females, younger ones who could spare their free time with their aged relatives and also provide a congenial social ambience, due to migration of parents in search of good jobs.

Looking at the economic front, an aging population leads to creation of slower labour force growth having an impact on the economy in many ways. The growth of GDP becomes slow. The system pays more to support the aged people rises. Though it is expected of the public policy to guarantee a healthy and better living facilities for the old age persons.

We may thus see that social and financial and social neglect are the main attributes of problems

of old age persons. There may be other attributes of social mistreatment, physical violence of old persons though it cannot be generalized. It may vary from social status of the family group to the way younger member are brought up by their respective parents.

Methodology

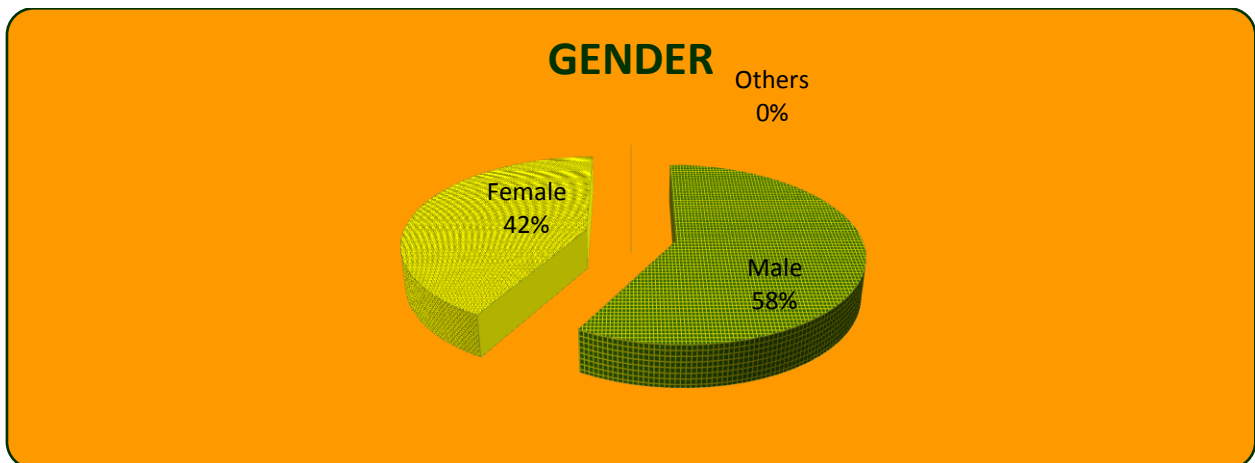
A simple descriptive methodology supported by strong and reliable data base and understanding of the nature, character and dimensions of data has been applied in this case.

Statistics Used

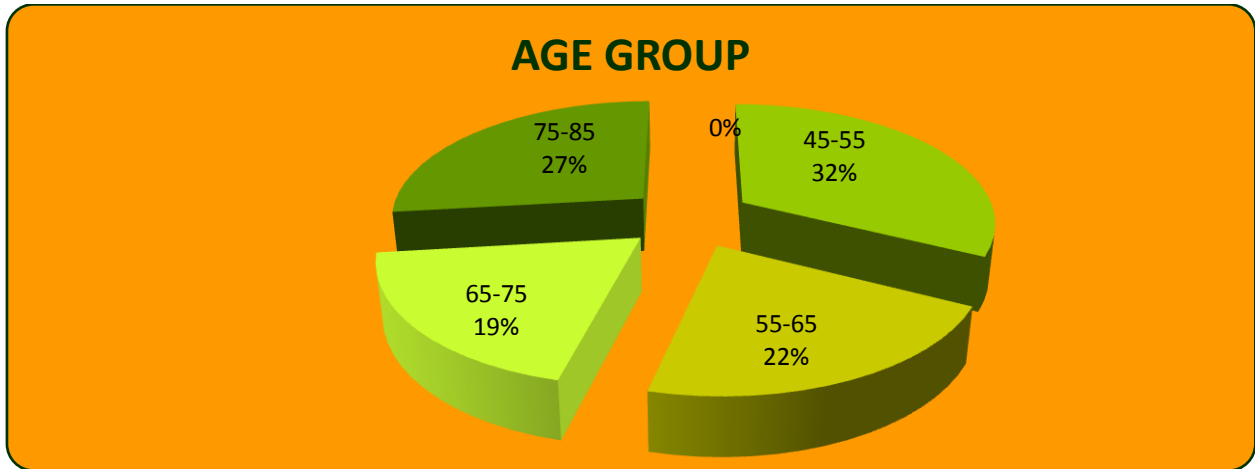
The statistical data base is derived from census data, 2011 and recent updates available for 2018 and 2019. Statistical information has been obtained from internet sources also with specific references cited there in.

Part 1 – Basic Information

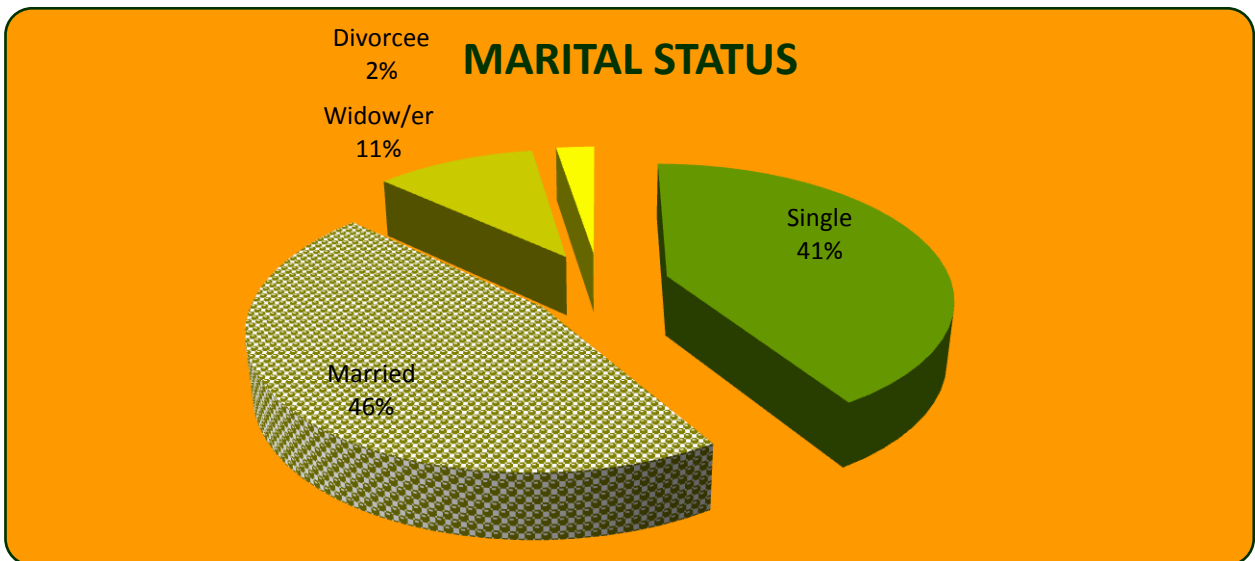
Gender		
Male	Female	Others
798	576	0



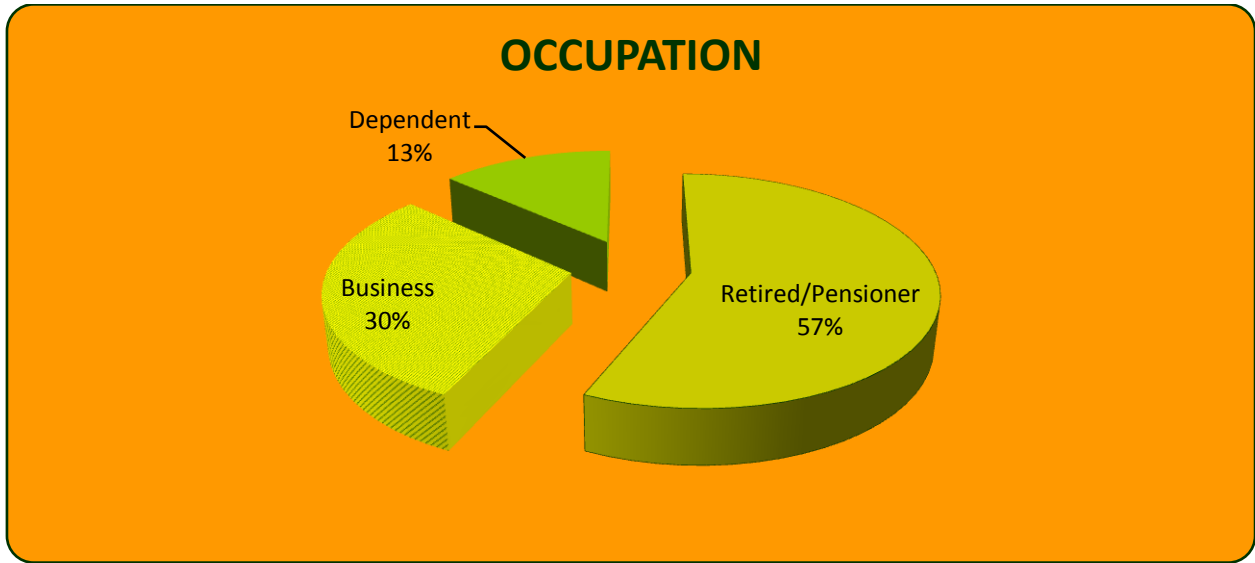
Age group (years)			
45-55	55-65	65-75	75-85
445	295	265	369



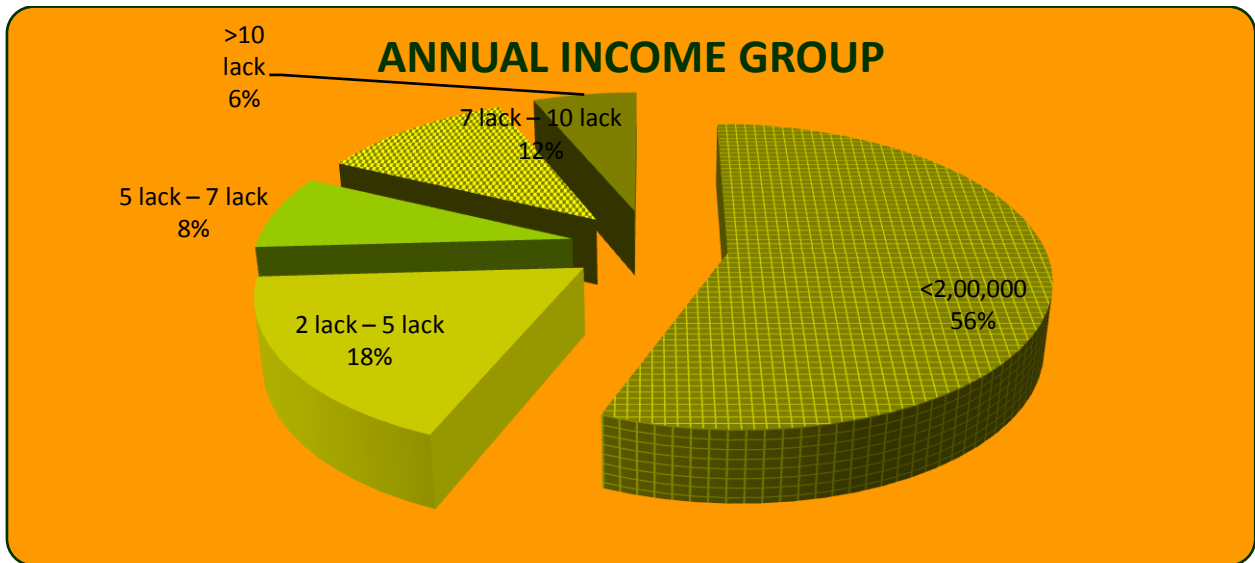
Marital Status			
Single	Married	Widow/er	Divorcee
565	627	147	35



Occupation		
Retired/Pensioner	Business	Dependent
751	395	178

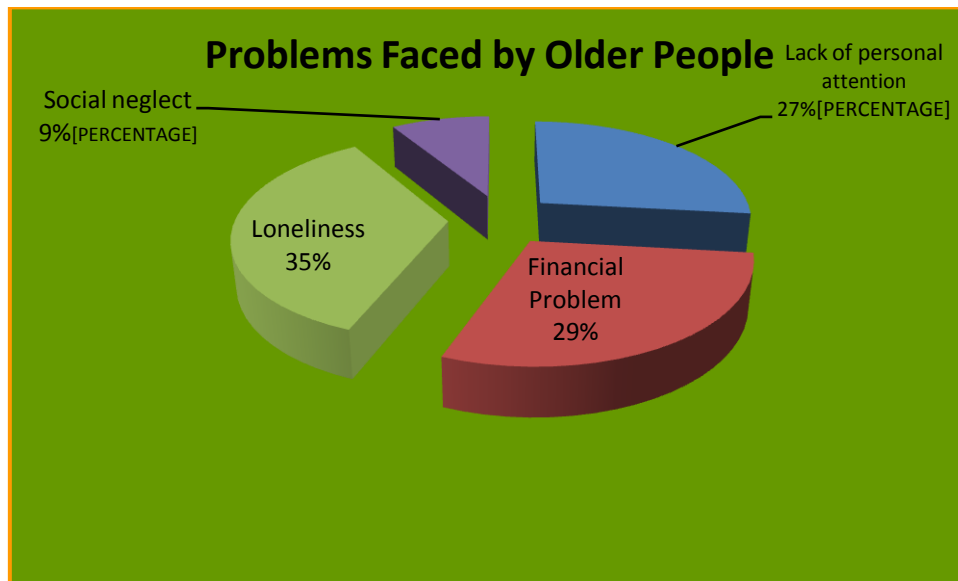


Income group (annually)				
<2,00,000	2 Lakhs – 5 Lakhs	5 Lakhs – 7 Lakhs	7 Lakhs – 10 Lakhs	>10 Lakhs
743	238	106	154	83



PART 2 – PROBLEMS FACED BY OLDER PEOPLE

Lack of personal attention	Financial Problem	Loneliness	social neglect
354	386	467	117



Explanation of Graphs

While researching over this paper, we took 798 males and 576 females in the age range of 45 years-85 years and total people surveyed 1324. Corresponding to different marital status, occupation and income, we come to the conclusion that compared with younger people, older people have a higher risk of adverse health outcomes when presenting to emergency departments. As the population ages, older people will make up an increasing proportion of the emergency department population. Therefore it is timely that be given to the quality of care received by older persons in emergency departments, and to consideration of those older people with special needs. Particular attention will be focused on important groups of older people, such as patients with cognitive impairment, residents of long term care and patients with palliative care needs. This project will develop a suite of quality indicators focused on the care of older persons in the emergency department.

Conclusions

The case of old age population is the normal outcome of prevailing demographic situation and human experiences, reading of data base for social media and understanding family situations in different regions, different income level groups, among deprived sections of population and through media sources.

It is not only the case of our country. Ageing population is a world level concern. It is therefore necessary to review the Indian panorama as well. India represents world's oldest human civilization. We have traditions, continuance of tradition, examples of a healthy living, a positive social infrastructure in which all members of the family get due and mutual respect.

Population aging will have dramatic effects on running social welfare schemes, supply of labor, markets and trade, monetary aspects around the globe and may call for new approaches to give justice to all, young, mature and old age persons.

Gita says 'It is better to live your own destiny imperfectly than to have an imitation of somebody else's life with perfection'.

There are at least many advantages of aging. Advantages to society of older persons include

their affectionate activity, chances of political participation, increasing interaction with voluntary organization, their own work abilities etc.

Old age homes are a western concept. India has a tradition of *vanprasth ashrams*. The old age persons had a tradition in ancient India to retire from active participation in routine life. They may retire to secluded, organized sacred groves where with lower needs and higher devotion to God may be practiced with lesser worldly needs. The steady security in *ashrams* gives them protection from intruders and helps them live a safe and secure life. They are in constant company of people their own age.

Recommendations

1. Identify at-risk individuals early on.
2. Help seniors be more self-sufficient.
3. Bring medical care into their own homes.
4. Protect them from social frauds.
5. Make the feel at home, not isolated.
6. Understand their problems and be ready with experience based pre-planned solutions.

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