



## Family and Marginalisation of Elders

### KEYWORDS

Elders, Family, relationship

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**ABSTRACT** Ageing is an emerging social issue in the developing countries like India. Unlike yesteryears, the family dilutes its social function which results in genesis of problems of elders. We know very well that it is a biological process and every individual of different social, economic and religious segments confronts this stage. We, the Indian, have very cherished values in which elders are given due reverence and respect. But the situation is like boot on the other leg. The emerging materialistic attitude and individualism make the milieu worse in which elders are alienated from his own family settings. Old age homes are the bye product of the present condition.

### INTRODUCTION

India has around 100 million elderly at present and the number is expected to increase to 323 million, constituting 20 per cent of the total population, by 2050," the report jointly brought out by United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Help Age International said. The elders are one of the most vulnerable segments which attract the attention of researchers and policy makers. It is inevitable to an individual to face this life stage, if he or she survives. Though ageing is a biological process, it has social implications. Marginalisation of elders is unique since their own family members marginalise them unlike women, SC/ST and religious minorities. In Indian families elders play a significant role. Their knowledge and wisdom were considered as important treasure trove. Family, especially joint family, is the basic social unit which provides care and support to the needy. In the due course of time, family shrinks its social functions and the needy are being deprived and abandoned. The new life styles, needs and demands make men to involve in cutthroat competitions. The acquisition wealth is, by and large, the prime goal of modern life. The intergenerational gulf is widening day by day which results in the marginalization of elders. The role played by the elders is replaced by secondary institutions.

### MATERIALS and METHOD

The present paper was based on the study conducted in the urban place, Second ward of kodalampatty (CT), of Salem which was purposively selected. The objectives were; to know the changing role of elders in family, to identify the problems, the level of adjustment between elders and other family members and find out the pattern of recreation of elders in the selected study area. Fifty samples have been selected by using purposive samples from Second ward of kodalampatty (CT). The second ward has the more population than other wards. The interview schedule and interview guide were used to collect the pertinent information from the elders. For this study, descriptive research design had been employed to describe the problems of elders. The collected data were analysed by using simple percentile scores.

### Results and Discussion

**Table 1.Socio-Economic-Demographic details of the Respondent**

S. No	Age	No of respondents	Percentage
1	60-69	22	44
2	70-79	17	34
3	80+	11	22
	Total	50	100

	Sex	No of respondents	Percentage
1	Male	17	34
2	Female	33	66
	Total	50	100
	Communi- nity	No of respondents	Percentage
1	BC	14	28
2	MBC	17	34
3	SC	19	38
	Total	50	100
	Educa- tional status	No of respondents	Percentage
1	Illiterate	34	68
2	Primary	11	22
3	Second- ary	5	10
	Total	50	100
S. No	Occu- pational status	No of respondents	Percentage
1	Agri- cultural coolie	32	64
2	Weaving coolie	14	28
3	Others (petty shop, lending)	4	08
	Total	50	100
S. No	Marital status	No of respondents	Percentage
1	Married	22	44
2	Widow	19	38
3	Widower	9	18
	Total	50	100

Age is one of the prime demographic features which determine the social, health and attitude of an individual. The data showed that 44 per cent of the elders come under the age group of 60-69, followed by 34 per cent 70-79 and 22 per cent 80+. The data revealed that female outnumber men. 66 per cent of elders were female. It was found that 38 per cent come under the fold of scheduled caste followed by 34 per

cent MBC and 28 per cent BC. The situation analysis of elders in India, 2011 stated that even in 2007-08 only 50% men and 20% of women aged 60 years or more were literate through formal schooling. Falling in the same line 68 per cent of them was illiterate. Literacy help to know the welfare programmes, legal measures and make them broad minded. 33 % are below the poverty line and majority of them are illiterate (Help age India).The mainstay occupation of the study area was agriculture and its allied activities. Majority of them (64%) indulged in agricultural work. Significant per cent (28) of respondents involved in weaving coolies and very meagre eke out their living by running petty shop, and lending money etc. The economic independence and dependence determine the status of elders. In rural areas 66% of elderly men and above 23% of aged women were still participating in economic activity (Situation Analysis of elders in India, 2011). As far as marital status was concerned, 56 percent of them deprived by lose of spouse and remaining led a married life. It was found that the mental health of the respondents depends on this.

**Table 2. Respondents by their Living Arrangement**

S. No	Category	No of respondents	Percentage
1	Living with Spouse	11	22
2	With Son	29	58
3	With daughter	10	20
	Total	50	100

The above table describe the living arrangement of elders. As far as India was concerned, offspring, especially sons, were the main care providers to elders. Issueless elders took asylum at old age homes or with relatives. The study revealed that 22 per cent were living with spouse followed by 58 per cent with sons and 20 per cent with daughter. There were cultural barriers which hinder to stay with daughter or son-in-law.

**Table 3. Respondents by their recreational pattern**

S. No	Category	No of respondents	Percentage
1	Reading Newspaper	16	32
2	Watching TV, Hearing Radio	8	16
3	Religious Activities	13	26
4	Spending time with grand children	13	26
	Total	50*	100

\*Some time there are overlapping of recreational activities

The ageing encompasses ample time and which was considered as problem. The happy ageing is possible to have some recreation. It was found that 32 per cent of them reading newspaper, especially the religious portion of the paper. 52 per cent involved in religious activities and spent time with their grand children. On the other hand, 16 per cent indulged in watching TV and hearing radio.

**Table 4. Respondents by their Relationship with Family Members**

S. No	Category	No of respondents	Percentage
1	Cordial	29	58
2	Strained	13	26
3	So-So	8	16
	Total	50	100

The relationship is the binding force which makes the life very meaningful. The life in the autumn days requires care and support from the caregivers. In the family setup, only the very near and dear take care the elders. But the types of family relationship determine happiness of the family members, especially elders. The study revealed that 58 per cent of elders had a cordial relationship followed by strained 26 per cent and So-So 16 per cent. There were different causes for strained relationship. According to them, the power equation between in-laws, individual ego, familial relationships were cited as triggering points to strained relationships.

**Table 5. Respondents by their Perception of their Major problems.**

S. No	Category	No of respondents	Percentage
1	Health Problems (ranging from major to minor health ailments)	22	44
2	Economic Problem	19	38
3	Others (Adjustment, abuses, and Loneliness)	9	18
	Total	50	100

Ageing was considered as the stage of problems. Since there was a wide spread dependency on the part of elders on care givers, it was perceived so. In rural areas 55 % of the aged with sickness and 77 % of those without sickness felt that they were in a good or fair condition of health. In urban areas the respective proportions were 63 % and 78 % (situation analysis of India,2011) . In this study, 44 per cent of them perceived their health was bone of contention. The range of health issues may be from acute to chronic diseases and disabilities. It was found that loss of sensory organs like vision and hearing were reported in the study. The joint and key pains also reported widely among the elders. on the other hand, economic hardship was experienced by 38 per cent of elders. 18 per cent of the elders stated that adjustment, elder abuses (verbal, physical, emotional) and loneliness were perceived as problems by the respondents.

**Table 6. Respondents by their Involvement in Decision Making**

S. No	Category	No of respondents	Percentage
1	Involved	35	70
2	Not involved	15	30
	Total	50	100

Ageing was considered as wisdom and experience. The decision making was rest in the hands of elders. But in the changing situation, the elders were sidelined and deprived from decision making. It was found that 70 per cent of the respondents positively said and remaining 30 per cent didn't involve in the decision making. The recent change in the technology, education thwarted them to involve in decision making.

**CONCLUSION**

Family is the basic social unit which provides shelter home to the elders and other needy people. In this study, it were found that

1. The elders perceived that health was the main problem and others were secondary one.
2. Still the elders were involved in the decision making expect the education of their grand children.
3. As far as relationship with family members were concerned, there were positive relationships.

4. Regarding recreational, there were a overlapping of activities. Literates can read newspapers. Rearing children and spending time with grandchildren was mostly like by the elders.

Salem is growing very fast. But still it is considered as very traditional one. The magnitude of the ageing problem is very less when compare to other places.

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