



A Study to Assess the Knowledge of Health Rights and Health Problems faced by Rural Senior Citizens of Tirupattur Vellore (Dist)

KEYWORDS

Senior Citizens, Human Rights, Knowledge

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ABSTRACT *Objective: To determine the level of knowledge of senior citizens on their rights and to know their deeper feelings. Subjects and method: A descriptive study was conducted on 40 senior citizens, male-20 and female-20 from the rural areas of Tirupattur, Vellore (Dist). A structured pre designed and pre tested self administered questionnaire was used to collect the data. The data was analyzed using SPSS. Results: 55% of the old people are aware of their rights. But more concentration and attention should be shown to females more than males. Conclusion: In this study it was found that old people living in rural area are still unaware of their basic rights and privileges given by the government. The reason behind this was their poor knowledge about the rights and privileges and the factor behind was their lower educational attainment. It is the next generation's responsibility not only to safeguard the elderly rights but also to save their lives without violating their rights.*

Introduction

Old age is the eighth stage of Erickson's eight stages in human development called ageing with integrity vs despair. The socio economic status, educational attainment and the place they live plays an important role for their productive quality of life.

Government of India adopted 'National Policy on Older Persons' in January, 1999. The policy defines 'senior citizen' or 'elderly' as a person who is of age 60 years or above. Also, as per Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007, senior citizen means any person being a citizen of India, who has attained the age of 60 years or above. 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 population of the older persons in India is continuously increasing. Old age is the period where a person feels a sense of closure and completeness when he is fully satisfied of his past life and financially stable in his rest of the life. The life is full of wisdom only when he enjoys his rights and privileges. This increasing population especially in rural areas is still unaware of the rights where their authority is ruined by their own generation, this is due to their less exposure, their life style and negligence to know their rights. The focus of this study is mainly on the health care rights of the senior citizens and to find whether the health care rights of the women senior citizens are discriminated more than the male senior citizens in rural areas. In India older generations are not aware of their human rights due to high prevalence of illiteracy and lack of awareness.

Results and Discussion**Age Profile of Respondents**

The Figure-1 Shows that majority 20 (50%) of the senior citizens belonged to the age group 60-65 years, 9(22.5%) belonged to 66-70 years, 4(10%) belonged to the age group of 71-75 years and 81-85 years and only few 3(7.5%) belonged to 76-80 years.

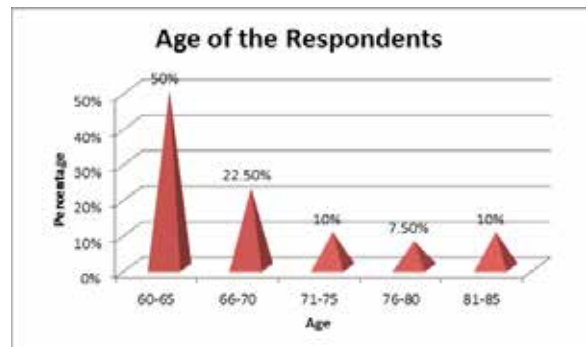
Figure-1 Age profile of the respondents**Educational Qualifications of the Respondents**

Table-1 Shows the educational qualification of the senior citizens. Majority 16(80%) of the females in this study were found to be uneducated were as only few 5(25%) males were uneducated. Majority 9 (45%) had at least had primary education. This shows in the early days men were given priority to study compared to women.

Table-2 Gender and their Educational Qualifications

n=40

| Gender | Educational Status of the Respondents | | | | | | | |
|--------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| | Uneducated | Primary | Secondary | Higher Sec | UG | Prof | Others | Total |
| Male | 5(25%) (23.8%) | 9 (45%) (81.8%) | 3(15%) (100%) | - | 1(5%) (100%) | 1(5%) (100%) | 1(5%) (100%) | 20(100%) (50%) |
| Female | 16(80%) (76.2%) | 2(10%) (18.2%) | - | 2(10%) (100%) | - | - | - | 20(100%) (50%) |
| Total | 21(52.5%) (100%) | 11(27.5%) (100%) | 3(7.5%) (100%) | 2(5%) (100%) | 1(2.5%) (100%) | 1(2.5%) (100%) | 1(2.5%) (100%) | 40(100%) (100%) |

Past and Present Employment:

Figure 2 shows past and present Employment status of the Respondents. In the past 45% of the females were unemployed (homemakers) and at present in their old age it has increased to 55%. 25% of the males were unemployed but there is a tremendous increase in unemployment which is 55% at present. Male dominated the business field in the past (10%) and in the present (15%) this shows that the business is allotted only for the males. In the present employment in private jobs, the males (10%) take the domination over females (5%).

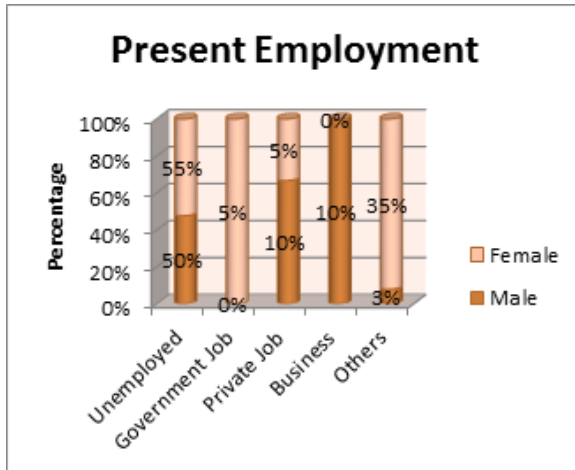


Figure 2 – Employment status of the Respondents

Monthly income of the Respondents:

Figure 3 shows the monthly income of the respondents. 80% of the elderly male earn 1000-3000 per month whereas in the female category 65% earn 1000-3000 Rs per month. In the earning of 3001-5000 there are females (15%). On the whole males earn more than females. From the above figure 2 it was revealed that most of the respondents are unemployed, but this figure 3 says all earn, which shows that most of the old people get government old age pension and that's the reason why most of them fall into the category of people who get a monthly income of 1000-3000. Our government gives old age pension of 1000 Rs to the people above the age of 60 years.

Figure 3 monthly incomes of the respondents Knowledge regarding Health Rights & Privileges

Table 3 revealed that the respondents had poor knowledge about their health rights and privileges provided by the Indian government. 15 (37.5%) of the respondents were not aware that there is a provision in Indian railways for senior citizens to avail lower births in train when booking their tickets. Only 16(40%) of the senior citizens are aware of concessions given to them in both Government and Private hospitals. Only few 15(37.5%) knew that in government general hospitals, there are specialty clinics for senior citizens. Very few 12 (30%) had the knowledge that government clinics are also open on Sundays and holidays for senior citizens. Most of the respondents had good knowledge about, the right of senior citizen to be provided with assistance like wheel chair/trolleys in hospitals. Over all rural senior citizens in this study had poor knowledge of their health rights and privileges, so more of awareness is needed for this group of people to enjoy their health privileges to lead a healthy life.

Table-3 Knowledge Parameters of Health Rights & Privileges n=40

| S.NO | Parameters of Knowledge | Correct Answer | Respondents' Correct Answer | |
|------|--|----------------|-----------------------------|-------|
| | | | F | % |
| 1 | Government of India adopted National Policy on Older Persons | True | 29 | 72.5% |
| 2 | International day of older persons is on July18 | False | 19 | 47.5% |
| 3 | Government hospitals provide concession to senior citizen according to their health problem | True | 16 | 40.0% |
| 4 | Private hospitals don't provide concession to senior citizen according to their health problem | False | 24 | 60.0% |
| 5 | Right for senior citizen to stand in separate queue in the hospitals | True | 20 | 50.0% |
| 6 | Right for senior citizen to provide assistance like wheel chair/trolleys | True | 32 | 80.0% |
| 7 | In government there is no specialty clinic for senior citizens | False | 15 | 37.5% |
| 8 | Government Clinics are also open on Sundays and holidays for senior citizens | True | 12 | 30.0% |
| 9 | Railways give concession to the persons above 58 years | False | 24 | 60.0% |
| 10 | Railways give 50% concession for women aged 60 and above | True | 26 | 65.0% |
| 11 | Railways give 30% concession for men aged 60 and above | True | 24 | 60.0% |
| 12 | Separate counters in railways for booking and cancelling the tickets | True | 26 | 65.0% |
| 13 | Conditions for lower birth in trains | True | 15 | 37.5% |
| 14 | Indian Government gives high rate of interest in post office | True | 22 | 55.0% |
| 15 | Indian Government gives low rate of interest in private banks | False | 28 | 70.0% |

Knowledge of Health Problems of Old Persons among Senior Citizens:

Table-4 Shows their knowledge on health issues. 24 (60%) of them gave the right answer that sugar patients never feel pain during cardiac attack. Only 17 (42.5%) of them know that the people above 60 years can undergo organ transplantation. Majority 32 (80%) had the knowledge that yoga and meditation controls health complication.

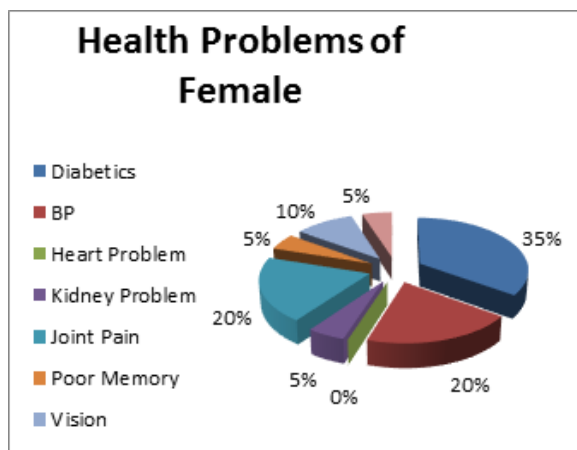
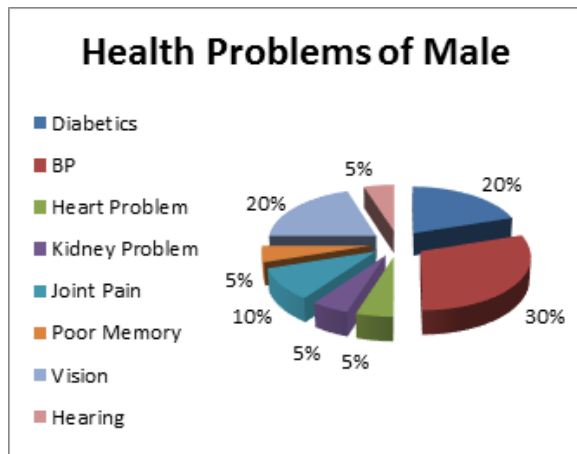
Table-4 Knowledge of Health Issues among Senior Citizens
n=40

| S No | Parameters of Knowledge on Health | Correct Response | Frequency | % |
|------|--|------------------|-----------|-------|
| 1 | Sugar patients never feel pain during cardiac attack | True | 24 | 60% |
| 2 | What is Arthritis? | Joint Pain | 23 | 57.5% |
| 3 | Poor memory is due to | Health condition | 13 | 32.5% |
| 4 | Above 60 years can undergo organ transplantation | True | 17 | 42.5% |
| 5 | Yoga and Meditation controls health complication | True | 32 | 80% |

Health Problems of the Respondents

Figure 4 shows the illness respective with the Gender. Here the females (35%) are suffering from diabetics whereas only 20% males are suffering from it. Males are highly affected by BP (30%) whereas only 20% of the females have blood pressure. 20% of the women have joint pain compare to male only 10% are affected with it. May be women have more physical work compare to the males. Other health problems like kidney problem, hearing loss, memory loss etc are very less in both the groups. The hospitals should turn their side on old people and the treatment should be given on time according to their needs.

Figure 4 Health Problems of the Respondents



Emotions during Sickness

Table-5 Shows the emotions of old people in this study when they undergo sickness. Most 9(45%) of the females have expressed that they feel like dying when they feel sick whereas only few 4(20%) male have felt like dying. May be poor financial status or lack of support from the family makes them feel like dying. Depressed feeling is more among male 7 (35%) and only few females 3 (15%).

In both male 8(40%) and female 7 (35%) have expressed that old age is a normal process in life. Good support given by their family members may reduce these negative feelings.

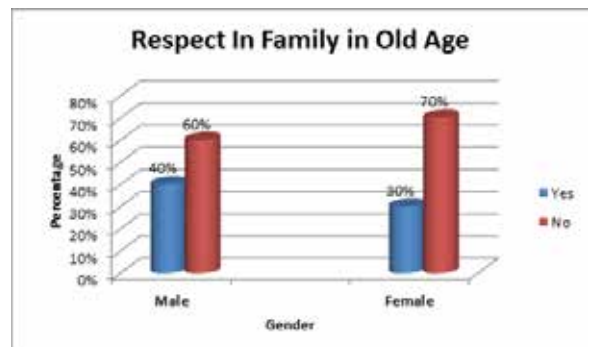
Table-5 Gender and their emotions during their Sickness
n=40

| Gender | Feeling of the respondents when they fell sick often | | | | |
|--------|--|--------------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| | Feel like dying | Depression | Angry | Normal | Total |
| Male | 4(20%) (30.8%) | 7 (35.0%) (70%) | 1(5%) (50%) | 8(40%) (53.3%) | 20(100%) (50%) |
| Female | 9(45.0%) (69.2%) | 3(15%) (30%) | 1(5%) (50.0%) | 7(35.0%) (46.7%) | 20(100%) (50%) |
| Total | 13(32.5%) (100%) | 10(25%) (100%) | 2(5%) (100%) | 15(37.5%) (100%) | 40(100%) (100%) |

Respect they receive from their Family Members

Figure 5 Shows In both the groups' majority of the respondents felt that they are not respected after they become old. Compare to male 60%, females 70% have expressed that they are less respected. Reasons can be during old age they are less productive financially and physically so family members take them as a burden than an asset.

Figure-5 Respect they receive from Family Members



Respondents Expectation from Family:

Table-6 gives a clear picture of the expectations of the old people from their family members. Here both the males and females are longing for love, care, time and support. Only few Male 2(10%) and 1(5%) female expect money from their family members. This proves that during old age men and women need more of love and support than financial assistance.

Table-6 Gender and their Expectation from family n=40

| Gender | Respondents' expectations from the family | | | | | | |
|--------|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| | Love | Care | Money | Time | Support | All the above | Total |
| Male | 5(25%) (50%) | 3(15%) (37.5%) | 2(10%) (66.7%) | 2(10%) (66.7%) | 2(10%) (40%) | 6(30%) (54.5%) | 20(100%) (50%) |
| Female | 5(25%) (50%) | 5(25%) (62.5%) | 1(5%) (33.3%) | 1(5%) (33.3%) | 3(15%) (60.0%) | 5(25%) (45.5%) | 20(100%) (50%) |
| Total | 10(25%) (100%) | 8(20%) (100%) | 3(7.5%) (100%) | 3(7.5%) (100%) | 5(12.5%) (100%) | 11(27.5%) (100%) | 40(100%) (100%) |

Conclusion:

World gives importance to children, adolescence, youth etc. But it fails to respect and honor the persons who were the pillars of the society. This study reveals that old people are respected less. What we do to others will be the same that what we are going to get in future. The respect we give will be the respect we take. Old female's senior citizens are dominated and ill-treated more by their family and the community than the males. Women's rights are always violated in all the ages and this study gives the proof of it. In the areas of education, income, respect they are least bothered by the society and they are affected both physically and psychologically. This shows how the society treats the women. Importance should be given to women and more rights should be given to the females of old age. More awareness program should be conducted for women senior citizens. Young people should come forward to take care of the elders. As the Central Government has implemented the National Programmers for Healthcare of Elderly (NPHCE), The State Governments have to work in a full swing to take care of elders. Students should take interest in geriatric medicine field. Old age pension(OAP) is very much needed for them. Awareness programs and free health camps for senior citizens on their health rights and privileges should be conducted by Government, NGOs and educational institutions in rural areas.

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