

# CAUSES AND PROBLEMS FACED BY INMATES OF OLD AGE HOMES IN MADURAI DISTRICT

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**Abstract:** Ageing has been defined as the total constellation of social, biological and psychological changes that occur in last stage of life. Ageing of the population is one of the most important demographic factors that have emerged in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Old age is the closing period of the life span. It is a period when people 'move away' from previous more desirable periods or times of 'usefulness'. Old age homes are a boon to those who do not enjoy the support of their children or have nobody to take care of them. At least old age homes provide them shelter, food and company. But definitely, nothing can compensate living with affectionate children and grand children. The objectives of the present study are as follows: i) to understand the socio - economic conditions of inmates of old age homes in the study area, ii) to find out the reasons behind the joining of the respondents in old age homes in the study area and iii) to find out the problems faced by old age people in the study area. This study is based on primary data. The data were collected from Madurai District. There are 30 registered old age homes in Madurai district. From each home, 10 respondents have been selected by adopting systematic sampling technique. Totally, the researcher has selected 300 respondents for this study. Average, Simple Percentage, Weighted Arithmetic Mean and Chi-square test are used to analyze the collected data.

**Keywords:** Old age Inmates, Old age Homes, Health Problems, Psychological Problems, etc.

## INTRODUCTION

Ageing has been defined as the total constellation of social, biological and psychological changes that occur in last stage of life. Ageing of the population is one of the most important demographic factors that have emerged in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Old age is the closing period of the life span. It is a period when people 'move away' from previous more desirable periods or times of 'usefulness'. Old age is considered as a curse, being associated with deterioration of all physical, psychological factors, isolation from social, economic, and other activities. Socially, this stage was considered as the sum total of one's lived experiences. Hence, the society offered a space of respect to the old. In such a society, the aged were the repositories, transmitters, and sole authorities of wisdom and knowledge. All these provided a 'golden age' concept to this stage, old age.

Old age homes are a boon to those who do not enjoy the support of their children or have nobody to take care of them. At least old age homes provide them shelter, food and company. But definitely, nothing can compensate living with affectionate children and grand children.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Old age is not a new phenomenon; it is as old human society. The elderly population in India is continuously increasing and also the problems faced by these people are increasing simultaneously. The number of people in old age homes is constantly increasing and also most of the parents are now deciding to live in the old age homes rather than living with their children. Now-a-days, these people are facing the problems like lack of care, emotional support and economic support from the family etc. Our culture recognizes the status of the parents on par with God. A moral duty is put on the children are observing in our society is that the children are not willing to take care of their parents, they do not want to spend money on them. The wards are treating their parents as aliens, and they do not want to share an emotional bond with parents. These children are forgetting that the foundation of their life is built up by the parents. They are forgetting their moral and ethical duties towards their parents. This is because of fast life, industrialization, money oriented minds, etc. Children have no time to look after their parents, because of their busy schedule and as a consequence of this situation the elders are getting neglected. At this time, some elderly people are shifted to the old age homes. Older people are considered a burden, because it is assumed that older persons have reduced physical and intellectual capabilities and are therefore dependent on the younger generation. The old people feel totally neglected and sometimes they have to take refuge in homes for the aged which are run by some social organizations. Feeling of loneliness, social economic status of aged, change in social roles, adjustment problems in old age, generational gap are some important factors behind need for institution. Old age persons suffer from unhappiness caused by their feeling of usefulness, loneliness, economic insecurity and adjustment problem. Old age is the closing period of life span. Some spend later part of life happily, whereas others face untold hardship and denied even the minimal comforts of life.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study are: i) to understand the socio - economic conditions of inmates of old age homes in the study area, ii) to find out the reasons behind the joining of the respondents in old age homes in the study area and iii) to find out the problems faced by old age people in the study area

## HYPOTHESES

To give a specific focus to the objectives, the following hypotheses have been framed to test the above said objectives by using appropriate statistical tools in the analysis chapter. They are:

- i)  $H_0$  : There is no significant association between gender and psychological problems.
- ii)  $H_0$  : There is no significant association between gender and emotional problems.

## METHODOLOGY

This study is based on primary data. The data were collected from Madurai District. There are 30 registered old age homes in Madurai district. From each home, 10 respondents have been selected by adopting systematic sampling technique. Totally, the researcher has selected 300 respondents for this study. Average, Simple Percentage, Weighted Arithmetic Mean and Chi-square test are used to analyze the collected data.

## ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY

### AGE – WISE CLASSIFICATION OF THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

Generally, the aged people thought that in the home, their wards have not considered them in taking any decision in family matters and felt isolated. Hence, it is very essential to classify the sample respondents on the basis of their age and the same is displayed in Table 1.

**TABLE 1**  
**AGE – WISE CLASSIFICATION OF THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS**

Sl. No.	Age in years	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Below 60	123	41.00
2.	60 – 70	126	42.00
3.	70 – 80	36	12.00
4.	Above 80	15	5.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Minimum Age – 52</b>		<b>Average Age – 63</b>	<b>Maximum Age – 86</b>

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

It is evident from Table 1 that, out of 300 respondents, 126 (42.00 per cent) respondents belong to the age group of 60 years to 70 years. The remaining 123 (41.00 per cent), 36 (12.00 per cent) and 15 (5.00 per cent) respondents are in the age group of below 60 years, 70 years to 80 years and above 80 years respectively. Minimum age, average age and maximum age of the inmates are estimated and the values are 52 years, 63 years and 86 years respectively.

### GENDER – WISE CLASSIFICATION OF THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

Gender plays a vital role in all aspects. According to the Hindu Undivided Family Law, the right to hold property is vested in the hands of the male members and not in female members. Normally male children are having more rights to get the parental properties than the female children. Hence, to get property share from their parents, to some extent the sons try to look after their parents. But the parents are taken care more by the female children than the male children. If a parent having female child is lucky enough compared with male child. But now – a – days, by Law both the male and female children are having equal rights to get the parental properties and at the same time the taking care of parents by their children in general (both male and female) declined. In this regard, the researcher wanted to classify the sample respondents on the basis of their gender. Accordingly, the researcher classified the respondents on the basis of gender and the same is shown in Table 2.

**TABLE 2**  
**GENDER – WISE CLASSIFICATION OF THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS**

Sl. No.	Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Male	113	37.67
2.	Female	187	62.33
<b>Total</b>		<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

It is evident from Table 2 that out of 300 respondents studied, 187 (62.33 per cent) respondents are female and the remaining 113 (37.67 per cent) respondents are male. In the study area, the female inmates are more in number compared to male inmates. The main reason behind this is no property, no savings in the names of female members. Even though there is a Law for equal property rights for male and female, the male members are dominating and give only very less share to their female heir. This tendency

should be changed and equal property share should be given to the female members. Because of this share of parental property, the women at the old age can be taken care of by their wards.

### SOCIO – ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

The researcher wanted to identify the socio – economic status of the sample respondents in the study area, because the ultimate aim of the researcher is to identify from which socio-economic group, more number of people come and reside in the old age homes. Accordingly, the researcher has collected information and the same is depicted Table 3.

**TABLE 3**  
**SOCIO – ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Upper Class	12	4.00
2.	Middle Class	124	41.34
3.	Lower Middle Class	105	35.00
4.	Upper Lower Class	40	13.33
5.	Lower Class	19	6.33
<b>Total</b>		<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

Table 3 shows that out of 300 respondents, 124 (41.34 per cent) respondents are from middle class family. Another 105 (35.00 per cent) respondents are from lower middle class family. The remaining 40 (13.33 per cent), 19 (6.33 per cent) and 12 (4.00 per cent) respondents are from upper middle, lower and upper class families respectively. It is understood from this table that a majority of the respondents are from middle class and lower middle class. If we put together nearly 76 per cent of the sample respondents fall under these socio-economic groups. From this table, one can come to the conclusion that the middle and lower middle socio-economic groups are not taking care of their elders and sent them to the old age homes.

### NATURE OF HOME

The old age homes are of two types. One is a free home, where the inmates have not paid any fees for the stay and the facilities provided. The second type of home is a paid home, where the inmates have to pay money to the home authorities for the stay, facilities provided and the care taken. In this context, the researcher wanted to classify the sample respondents on the basis of nature of homes. Accordingly, the researcher has collected and classified the information and the same is presented in Table 4.

**TABLE 4**  
**NATURE OF HOME**

Sl. No.	Nature of Home	No. of Homes	Percentage
1.	Free Home	12	40.00
2.	Paid Home	18	60.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

Table 4 clearly depicts that out of 30 homes taken for the study, 18 (60.00 per cent) homes are paid homes. The remaining 12 (40.00 per cent) homes are free homes. It is identified that out of 300 respondents, 180 (60.00 per cent) respondents are staying in paid homes and the remaining 120 (40.00 per cent) respondents are staying in free homes. It is inferred from this table that nearly 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of the sample respondents are staying in paid homes. It means money is not a problem.

### FEES PAID BY THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

The researcher wanted to aware the money paid by the sample respondents as fees to the old age homes. Accordingly, the researcher has collected the information about the amount of fees paid by the sample respondents and the same is given in Table 5.

**TABLE 5**  
**FEES PAID BY THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS**

Sl. No.	Fees (in Rs.)	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Below 1500	112	62.22
2.	1500 – 3000	44	24.45
3.	Above 3000	24	13.33
<b>Total</b>		<b>180</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Minimum Fee = Rs.1000</b>		<b>Average Fee = Rs. 2250</b>	<b>Maximum Fee = Rs.5000</b>

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

It is inferred from Table 5 that out of 180 respondents stayed in the paid homes, 112 (62.22 per cent) respondents pay a monthly fees of below Rs. 1500 to the home authorities. The remaining 44 (24.45 per cent) and 24 (13.33 per cent) respondents pay the

amount ranges from Rs. 1500 to Rs. 3000 and above Rs. 3000 per month as fees to the old age home authorities. The researcher estimated the maximum, minimum and the average amount of fees paid by the inmates and the same is Rs. 5000, Rs. 1000 and Rs. 2250 respectively.

### REASONS FOR JOINING THE OLD AGE HOMES

One of the important objectives of the study is to identify the reasons behind the joining of old age homes. In this regard, the researcher wanted to identify the reasons for joining the old age homes by the sample inmates on the basis of five point scale scores and the same is given in Table 6.

**TABLE 6**  
**WEIGHTED ARITHMETIC MEAN**

Sl. No.	Particulars	W.A.M.	Rank
1.	To meet out the basic needs	42.01	VII
2.	Rejections by family members	44.69	I
3.	Unproductivity	43.23	II
4.	No one cares after demise of spouse	42.53	IV
5.	Not having own children to care	43.00	III
6.	Not to be a burden for family members	42.34	V
7.	My own interest	42.20	VI

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

The researcher ranked the weighted arithmetic mean values to identify the most and least important factors. It is evident from Table 6 that the most important reason for joining the old age home is rejection by family members and it stood first rank. The least important factor is to meet out their basic needs and it stood seventh rank. There are seven factors given to the respondents and got their perception towards that using five point scales. Out of these seven points, no one cares after demise of spouse fall on the middle band or the border line dividing the reasons into three most important factors and three least important factors. Accordingly, the three most important factors are rejection by family members, unproductivity, not having own children to take care fall on first, second and third places respectively. The three least important factors are not to be a burden for family members, my own interest and to meet out the basic needs fall on fifth, sixth and seventh places respectively.

### HEALTH PROBLEMS

The analysis of National Sample Survey data reveals that a majority of the elderly people are chronically ill. Cough and problem of joints are the most common health problems of aged people. The health decline in ageing refers to the physical changes because of the decline in the normal functioning of the body resulting in poor morbidity, vision, hearing, inability to eat and digest food properly and various chronic conditions. In this regard, the researcher wanted to know the health problems faced by the sample respondents in the study area. Accordingly, the researcher has collected, classified and shown the information in Table 7.

**TABLE 7**  
**HEALTH PROBLEMS**

Sl. No.	Health Problems	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Eye Sight Problem	156	64.46
2.	Joint Pain	181	74.79
3.	Ear Problem	47	19.42
4.	Heart Problem	39	16.12
5.	Blood Pressure	54	22.31
6.	Disturbed Sleep	167	69.01
7.	Back Pain	88	36.36
8.	Breathlessness	76	31.40
9.	Diabetes	142	58.68
10.	TB	86	35.54
11.	Thyroid	37	15.29

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

From Table 7 it is evident that out of 300 respondents, 181 (74.79 per cent) respondents are having joint pain problem. Another 167 (69.01 per cent) and 156 (64.46 per cent) respondents have disturbed sleep and eye sight problem respectively. One hundred and forty two (58.68 per cent) and 88 (36.36 per cent) respondents affected with diabetes and back pain problem respectively. The remaining 86 (35.54 per cent), 76 (31.40 per cent), 54 (22.31 per cent), 47 (19.42 per cent), 39 (16.12 per cent) and 37 (15.29 per cent) respondents are affected by TB, breathlessness, blood pressure, ear problem, heart problem and thyroid problem respectively in the study area.

### PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

With growing age, aged person experiences various physiological changes. Old age persons suffer from unhappiness caused by their feeling of loneliness, economic insecurity etc. Old age is the closing period of every one's life span. Some spend later part of life happily, whereas others face untold hardship and denied even the minimal comforts of life. Generally, the aged people feel insecure, loneliness, stress, decline in memory and the inability to control certain physiological functions and behave like a child. In this sense, the researcher wanted to know the major psychological problems faced by the sample respondents. Accordingly, the researcher has collected the information and the same is depicted in Table 8.

**TABLE 8**  
**PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS**

Sl. No.	Psychological Problems	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Feeling Loneliness	149	49.67
2.	Feeling Burden	83	27.67
3.	Mental Stress	53	17.66
4.	Feeling Helplessness	15	5.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

It is understood from Table 8 that out of 300 respondents, 149 (49.67 per cent) respondents felt that loneliness is the major psychological problem faced by them. Another 83 (27.67 per cent) respondents informed that, they themselves felt and said that they are not only burden to the family, but also burden to the society and during interview they said that they are counting their days. The remaining 53 (17.66 per cent) and 15 (5.00 per cent) respondents are of the opinion that, the major psychological problem is mental stress and feeling helplessness respectively.

#### EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS

The researcher wanted to identify the emotional problems faced by the inmates of the old age homes in the study area. Accordingly, the researcher collected the information and the same is picturised in Table 9.

**TABLE 9**  
**EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS**

Sl. No.	Emotional Problems	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Difficulty in Recollecting Things	19	6.33
2.	Lack of Motive to Live	38	12.67
3.	Life Feels Like Burden	135	45.00
4.	Lack of Concentration	91	30.33
5.	Negative Tendency	17	5.67
<b>Total</b>		<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

It is explained from Table 9 that out of 300 respondents, 135 (45.00 per cent) respondents felt that life feels like burden is the major emotional problem. Another 91 (30.33 per cent) and 38 (12.67 per cent) respondents informed that, they themselves felt that lack of concentration and lack of motive to live. The remaining 19 (6.33 per cent) and 17 (5.67 per cent) respondents informed that, the major emotional problem is the difficulty in recollecting things and negative tendency respectively.

#### GENDER AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

❖ **H<sub>0</sub> : There is no significant association between gender and psychological problems**

**TABLE 10**  
**CHI – SQUARE ESTIMATION OF AGE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS**

Particulars	Values
Calculated value	1.081
Table value at 5 per cent	7.815
Degrees of freedom	3
Inference	Not significant

\*Five per cent level of significance

From Table 10, it is observed that the calculated value of Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) is 1.081, which is lesser than the table value 7.815 at five per cent level of significance. Therefore, one can accept the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ), i.e., there is no significant association between gender and psychological problems.



**GENDER AND EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS**❖ **H<sub>0</sub> : There is no significant association between gender and emotional problems****TABLE 11**  
**CHI – SQUARE ESTIMATION OF GENDER AND EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS**

Particulars	Values
Calculated value	4.192
Table value at 5 per cent	7.815
Degrees of freedom	3
Inference	Not significant

\*Five per cent level of significance

From Table 11, it is observed that the calculated value of Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) is 4.192, which is lesser than the table value 7.815 at five per cent level of significance. Therefore, one can accept the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ), i.e., there is no significant association between gender and emotional problems.

**SUGGESTIONS OF THE STUDY**

The study found that most of the inmates of the old age homes are economically dependent and less educated. Further, the health conditions of the inmates are not satisfactory. In this regard, the researcher has made the following suggestions to improve the status of the inmates of the old age homes:

- In the olden days, most of the people were in joint family and had a chance to live with each other and share their views and ideas. It has created affection and attachment with each other. Give and take policy was inculcated among the children in their younger age and the most important is nurtured the habit of giving respect and taking care of the elders. But in the modern age, we are all separated and forgotten the values of joint family system and follow nuclear family, no chance or rare chance for meeting relatives, helping one another etc. Totally the moral and social values developed by our forefathers are depleted. Sending our fathers and mothers to the old age homes is the reflection of the above said. Hence, all the parents should take initiative to impose the value of joint family system, respect to the elders etc., to avoid the mushroom growth of the old age homes.
- Parents always want to spend all their earnings for the growth and development of their children with the faith that they will take care in the future. Because of that only many parents won't make any savings for their future. It means, they think only about the future of their children not their future. But now – a – days, many children not react according to their parent's action. Hence, it is safe, if the parents make some savings for their future.
- Due to the age factor and loneliness, the elderly people in the old age homes are affected both physically and mentally. They should need counseling to remove mental stress and health facilities to free from physical problems. To examine the health conditions and provide medical facilities to the inmates of the old age homes, geriatric homes should be constructed by the Government.
- The values and importance of elders in the family should be imparted to the young minds and make them safeguard every ones parents and control the mushroom growth of the old age homes. Severe Law should be introduced in this regard. Counselling should be given to both the parents and children.

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