

## PROBLEM AND CHALLENGES FACED BY ELDER PEOPLE IN OLD AGE HOMES: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

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### ABSTRACT

*The main objective of this study is to examine the life of people in old age homes and their quality of life and the challenges that the elderly face in old age homes. In this study, the data of old age homes were used. The data was collected through interviews and non-participant observation from elderly living within the organization was conducted. The data was collected from both males and females having age 60 years and above. The study findings showed that elderly people faced multiple problems in old age homes that include psychological, physical, emotional, lack of facilities, and health challenges in old age homes. The study suggested that there should be a plan of action should be implanted through family, society members, and government as well to manage the problems of the elderly.*

**Keywords:** *Elderly, Care, Depression, Health Challenges, old age home*

### INTRODUCTION

The elderly are a part of the population of any country and they need respect and attention equally like any other segment of the population (Nwakasi & Roberts, 2021; Tang, 2021). However, due to changing family structure and modernization, the elderly population is facing so many challenges to living their life respectfully (Cummings et al., 2021; Newman, Prabhu, Akkakanjanasupar, & Tepjan, 2021). Loneliness, negligence and less importance, illness due to aging, and lack of treatment are the most common problems that the elderly are facing (Wrenn & Lizardi, 2020; Zelalem & Gebremariam Kotecho, 2020).

New economic orders compel families to focus more on amenities than the aged people (Souralová & Žáková, 2020). Even then, many if not the majority of the older persons are not helped by their families to fulfill their immediate requirements and facing hardships like less respect, no care, no attention, sickness, and physical maltreatment, and violence against them (Saeed & Shoaib, 2012; Saeed, Shoaib, & Ilyas, 2011; Shoaib, Khan, & Khan, 2011). A highly common abusive practice is in the form of financial exploitation, depriving the elderly of their resources and income, misusing it, or obtaining it by force and coercion for personal profit and gains (Bimpson, Parr, & Reeve, 2020; Finlay & Finn, 2020; Sikes, 2020). The rapid increase in urbanization and modernization has led to a transformation in the socio-economic structure, and letting down of social norms, forgetting the social values, and social institutions such as the joint family (Scoones, Mavedzenge, & Murimbarimba, 2019; Wayne, 2019; Zhang, 2019). In this varying economic and social environment, the younger generation is insightful for new individualities including economic liberty, and redefined social roles within, as well as outside the family (Saeed & Shoaib, 2012; Saeed et al., 2011; Shoaib et al., 2011). The transforming economic structure has declined the dependence of rural families on land which has developed the authority and control to create links between generations (Harrington, 2019; Huang, 2018; Y.-H. Lee, 2018). The other main cause that was resulted was that the children of the elderly after their marriage forcefully kicked them in

old age homes and never contact them back (Benson, Schwarz, Tofle, & Parker Oliver, 2018). Even they don't attend their funeral as well (McGrath, Sidhu, & Mahl, 2017). Hence, it is the need of time to address the issue of the elderly and provide them care in a better way.

### **The objective of the study**

The main objective of the study is to examine the problems and challenges faced by the elderly in old-age homes in Punjab, Pakistan.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Several studies have been conducted on elderly care and problems faced by old people in developing and developed countries (Conrad, Iris, & Liu, 2017; Luo, 2016; Saint-Jacques et al., 2016; Witten, 2016). These problems include physical abuse, economic abuse, psychological health issues, social well-being issues, family matters, and recreational as well (Saeed & Shoaib, 2012; Saeed et al., 2011; Shoaib et al., 2011). Although, there is a number of an old home that is providing care to them but not satisfactory and insufficient (Mbakile-Mahlanza, Manderson, & Ponsford, 2015). There has been an increase in the demand for old age homes in Pakistan and all the countries of the world, as elderly individuals do experience problems in living alone or with their children (Y.-S. Lee, Moon, & Gomez, 2014; Saeed et al., 2011; Shoaib et al., 2011). In various cities, towns, and rural areas, there is a demand for old age homes; the establishment of old age homes are not following certain principles or standards but the main objective is to make a living of all the elderly people satisfied and pleasurable (Brozowski & Hall, 2004; Shankle, Maxwell, Katzman, & Landers, 2003; Stevens-Ratchford & Diaz, 2003). However, minimum services for adequate living are the food, sleeping, recreation, reading, etc. that are required to create a healthy atmosphere (Alley, Liebig, Pynoos, Banerjee, & Choi, 2007; Hughes & Heycox, 2005; Stanford, 2006). A consulting doctor normally visits the old age home every week for regular checkups and specific consultation (Bagheri-Nesami, Rafii, & H. Oskouie, 2010; Clark-Kazak, 2009; Lowenstein & Doron, 2008). The life expectancy in Pakistan was 45.6 years in 1971 which had increased to 58.2 years in 1991 and 65 years in 2001. The demand for old age homes originated with an increase in the elderly population within the society. The number of people above the age of 60 was 6.2 crores in 1996 which had increased to 7.06 crores in 2001. Due to various reasons, elderly people are not able to live autonomously without any support. In most cases, the children may be employed elsewhere and they face problems indirectly supporting their parents, in cases, elderly people develop an enthusiasm to get admitted in old age homes (Saeed & Shoaib, 2012; Saeed et al., 2011; Shoaib et al., 2011).

Old age homes are established in different manners, in some of them, there are 75 persons and 15 rooms, five persons usually live in one room. The individuals are not required to purchase all the materials of daily use such as soaps, detergents, medicines, chemicals, vegetables, fruits, and groceries every month from the regular suppliers who visit. Along with these challenges, there are multiple problems faced by the old people in Punjab, Pakistan. Hence, this study attempt to examine the problems and challenges faced by elder people in the old home in the Punjab, Pakistan.

## **THE DATA AND METHODS**

The data was collected through unstructured interviews from an old age home .the data was collected from the owner of an old age home and the respondents. At the time of data collection, more than 86 people were residing in the old home population of the study. Hence, in-depth interviews were conducted and used as a technique of data collection from males

and females residing in the *Apna Ghar*-old home. The manager of the old age home was also being interviewed.

### **Interview**

An interview in qualitative research is a conversation where questions are asked to elicit information. The interviewer is usually a professional or paid researcher, sometimes trained, who poses questions to the interviewee, in an alternating series of usually brief questions and answers. Firstly the lady who was the owner of the old age home was interviewed. She told everything related to the topic. She cooperated and told many stories of persons who were present there and the persons who are not alive and expired in *Apna Ghar*. The lady was asked different questions. She answered all the questions without creating any issues. The environment was very friendly. She told that she is running the institute for many years and she visits the UK once a year .there she do a job and when she came to Pakistan she spend the money of her salary from the UK to the people of old age home (*Apna Ghar*). She told that how this idea of *Apna Ghar* came into her mind when it was started, either it is government or private institute and either government gave funds to the institute or not. She further gets informed that sometimes some local people helped them by giving Zakat etc.

### **Non-participant Observation**

Observation is a type of qualitative research method which not only included participant's observation but also covered ethnography and research work in the field. In the observational research design, multiple study sites are involved. Observational data can be integrated as auxiliary or confirmatory research. The behavior of people in a natural setting was being observed. The behavior of the owner was also being observed. There were negative aspects as well that were observed during the visit to *Apna Ghar*. In contrast, the thing that was observed about a female that they were fighting with each other and the atmosphere was not peaceful. Some so many female respondents have psychological issues it was very difficult to handle them. During an interview with male respondents, another thing that was observed was that the male respondents were more emotional and physically week than the female.

### **Photography and Videography**

The most common approaches to analyze photographs, such as content analysis, discourse analysis, and ethnographic analysis are describe Finally, ethical issues in research using photographs are considered, especially the meaning of informed consent and confidentiality in photographic research is emphasized.

Photography is infected a difficult method most people did not allow the researcher to take video and snaps. The researcher must first take permission from the respondent. To collect the data the researcher should keep in mind the rules and regulations of data collection. During a visit to *Apna Ghar*, the researcher took videos of infrastructure. Photography and videography were taken from the *Apna Ghar* which reflects their behaviors.

### **Living in Old Age Homes**

In old age homes, in most cases, the elderly individuals enjoy and take pleasure in their living. There have been certain reasons due to which they feel lonely, upset and sometimes depressed but on the whole, their living in old age homes is contented. The elderly have neither as such routine. After breakfast, they don't have any specific activity nor any time spending activity which results in increasing their emotional level by idle thinking how they were being kicked by their children and family. There have been many factors that lead to the institutionalization of the elderly individuals, these include the availability of family support for the individuals, include the accessibility of caring family members for old people who are

no longer able to sustain full independence, income, housing, provision of health and welfare services and predominance of mental and physical disability.

Among the frequent environmental and external factors that transform aging, nutrition plays a significant role. The indivisible triad of nutrition, aging, and health is the rational basis for the proper administration of predicaments that arise and hinder the interdependent factors. In Pakistan, the group of the elderly population depends on their children for physical, moral, and financial support. However, due to the socio-cultural changes taking place in Pakistan and the joint family system gradually withdrawing the materialization of institutional homes is on the rise with a steady increase in the number of individuals joining institutions. The elderly taking shelter in old age homes are either enthusiastically or forced to live in such circumstances for several different reasons. With this the elderly may recognize to live in an environment that is either unfamiliar to their own and or they become accustomed to the changing environment and circumstances imposed on them. The living of the elderly in old age homes centers on the availability of physical facilities, sanitary conditions, communication, social network, health conditions, nutritional status, and nutritional knowledge.

### **Problems and challenges faced by elderly in old age home**

This article outlines the biggest challenges that elderly people face today and how we can support them and enable them to age with dignity.

#### ***Physiological Problems***

As in old age homes there is no proper medication or visit of doctor on daily basis and have no routine check-up results in physical problems .there is no proper care for them of their elderly issues. Old age is a period of physical decline. Even if one does not become sans eyes, sans teeth, sans everything, right away, one does begin to slow down physically. The physical condition depends partly upon the hereditary constitution, the manner of living, and environmental factors. Vicissitudes of living, faulty diet, malnutrition, infectious, intoxications, gluttony, inadequate rest, emotional stress, overwork, endocrine disorders, and environmental conditions like heat and cold are some of the common secondary causes of physical decline. The skin becomes rough and loses its elasticity. Wrinkles are formed and the veins show out prominently on the skin. Perspiration is less profuse and another skin pigmentation appears as the age advances. The hair becomes thin and grey, nails become thick and tough. Tremors of the hands, forearms, head, and lower jaw are common. Bones harden in old age, become brittle, and are subject to fractures and breaks.

Changes in the nervous system have a marked influence on the brain. Atrophy is particularly marked in the spleen, liver, and soft organs. The ratio of heart weight to body weight decreases gradually. The softness and pliability of the valves change gradually because of an increase in the fibrous tissue from the deposits of cholesterol and calcium. The aged are also prone to heart disease, other minor ailments, and chronic diseases.

Due to the weakening regulatory mechanism, the body temperature is affected. Therefore the old persons feel the change in a climate more profoundly than others. They suffer from digestive troubles, insomnia. Due to dental problems they are not able to chew or swallow well. The old are more accident-prone because of their slow reaction to dangers resulting in malfunctioning of the sense organs and declining mental abilities, the capacity to work decreases. Eyes and ears are greatly affected Changes in the nerve center in the brain and retina affect vision and sensitivity to certain colors gradually decreases. Most old people suffer from far-sightedness because of diminishing eyesight.

### ***Psychological Problems***

Hence they do not live with their family they became emotionally very weak though they became mentally retarded. Mental disorders are very much associated with old age. Older people are susceptible to psychotic depressions. The two major psychotic disorders of older people are senile dementia (associated with cerebral atrophy and degeneration) and psychosis with cerebral arteries sclerosis (associated with either blocking or ruptures in the cerebral arteries). It has been observed that these two disorders account for approximately 80 percent of the psychotic disorders among older people in civilized societies.

### ***Senile Dementia***

In old age homes, they are not provided with a separate room to fulfill their need for sleep. In-room of five people one cannot feel easy to sleep. Loss of adequate sleep results in health disorders. Older people suffer from senile dementia. They develop symptoms like poor memory, intolerance of change, disorientation, restlessness, insomnia, failure of judgment, a gradual formation of delusion and hallucinations, extreme-mental depression and agitation, severe mental clouding in which the individual becomes restless, combative, resistive, and incoherent. In extreme cases, the patient becomes bedridden and disease resistance is lowered resulting in his days being numbered.

### ***Emotional Problem***

The negligence and indifferent attitude of the family members towards the older people create more emotional problems. The elderly miss their family a lot and cry in tears by missing their family. They feel completely lonely in the old age home because there is no one to share their grief with. They always love and wait for their family. By thinking about the negative behavior of their family towards them they became mentally sick day by day.

### ***Social Problem***

Within the organization, the elderly are bound to stay in the old age home every time they are not allowed to go outside. They are socially restricted that is the main problem faced by elderly in old age home.

### ***Financial Problem***

Every people in the world have some needs in the same way the elderly also have some needs which they want to fulfill with their desire. By living in an old age home they are dependent on the organization. They have no money to spend on themselves.

### ***Mobility Barrier***

The elderly won't go anywhere outside the boundary wall. They are bound to stay in the old age home. Even within the boundary, there is a fixed time for lunch, dinner, watching television, etc.

### ***Depression***

The presence of perceived loneliness in old age homes contributed strongly to the effect of depression on mortality. Thus, in the oldest old, depression is associated with mortality only when feelings of loneliness are present. Depression is a problem that often accompanies loneliness. In many cases, depressive symptoms such as withdrawal, anxiety, lack of motivation and sadness mimic and mask the symptoms of loneliness.

## **DISCUSSION**

Old age is stated to be the most difficult part of one's life, in this stage, it is important for an individual to remain happy, satisfied, and peaceful (Finlay & Finn, 2020; Harrington, 2019;



McGrath et al., 2017). If a person is happy, he always feels young and develops enthusiasm and willingness towards everything. He takes interest in watching television, listening to music, gets himself engaged in recreational and extracurricular activities such as sports, games, music, and even in singing devotional songs, and other kinds of songs (Saint-Jacques et al., 2016; Wayne, 2019). It is the responsibility of the family members at home and in old age homes, it is up to the staff members involved to see that the elderly individuals are well taken care of (S.-j. Lee & Ahn, 2013; Newman et al., 2021). Besides making provision of the physical care, the elderly individuals require the company to interact with, they should be made to feel that they are not a burden rather they are always to be adored and respected (Wayne, 2019). Elderly individuals do possess a good amount of knowledge about different ways to live life effectively, hence they should be consulted when an individual needs any kind of advice and guidance (Huang, 2018).

There have been several reasons that why individuals get admitted into old age homes, they either move to old age homes following their wishes or they are forced to move by their family members (Saeed & Shoaib, 2012; Saeed et al., 2011; Shoaib et al., 2011). The main reasons have been aging, difficulties in carrying out the household chores, mistreatment and exploitation of the elderly individuals by their family members, and loneliness. In old age homes, there is the availability of proper facilities but elderly individuals do face problems and difficulties; the main problems have been regarding adjustment and familiarizing themselves with the environmental conditions and the people around (Bowes, Avan, & Macintosh, 2012; Clark-Kazak, 2009; S.-j. Lee & Ahn, 2013). Elderly individuals may make new friends around but despite having good friends, they do not have their family members and feel secluded, due to this elderly individuals develop the feeling of depression (Harrington, 2019; Huang, 2018; Y.-H. Lee, 2018). The main problems have been isolation, loneliness, socio-economic status, generational gap, adjustment problems, and transformations within the social roles.

## CONCLUSION

The conclusion, based on the study is:

1. Elderly are facing multiple problems and challenges at shelter homes.
2. They are facing multiple problems in old age homes, these include psychological, physical, emotional, lack of facilities, and health challenges in an old age home.
3. The study suggested that there may be a plan of action and it may implanted through family, society members, and government to manage the problems of the elderly.
4. There is a dire need to manage the problems of the elderly in time that may strengthen their later life.

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