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Reasons of shifting in old age homes

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Abstract

In India, old age has historically not been considered a problematic issue. However, recent demographic, socio-economic, and structural changes have brought ageing issues to the forefront of social concern. Family institutions have also been impacted, presenting a unique challenge in providing care for the elderly. As a result, old age homes have emerged as alternative care facilities for the elderly in India, leading to an increase in the study of elderly individuals residing in such homes. A recent study conducted in Kanpur and Lucknow, India examined the reasons behind the shift of elderly individuals to old age homes. The study aimed to identify the factors that have compelled the elderly to stay in these institutions. To achieve this, a sample of 300 institutionalized elderly individuals was taken. The results showed that the most common reasons for shifting to old age homes included misbehavior by the son and daughter-in-law, life threats from children, having no son, being unable to tolerate interference from family members, poverty or a lack of financial support, desiring an independent and peaceful life, homelessness, and a lack of a caretaker at home. Given the significance of these findings, it is essential to address the issues faced by the elderly in India.

Keywords: Old age home, elderly, Care

Introduction

India, a developing country with a rich cultural heritage, is currently experiencing a significant shift in its demographic landscape. The rapid aging of the population is a result of urbanization, modernization, and globalization. These factors have brought about changes in the economic structure of the country, the erosion of societal and social values, and the weakening of social institutions such as the joint family. The younger generation in India is in search of new identities that embody economic independence and redefined social roles within and outside of the family. This changing economic and social milieu has also reduced the dependence of rural families on land, which traditionally strengthened the bonds between generations. Research has shown that life satisfaction is closely related to socio-demographic and psycho-social variables. Old age is associated with reduced physical ability, declining mental ability, giving up of socioeconomic roles, and a shift in economic status from independence to dependence on others for support. However, the concept of an old age home is still relatively new to India. An old age home is a place where elderly individuals who have no one to care for them or have been abandoned by their children can find shelter and support. These homes provide the necessary facilities for routine living, such as food, clothing, and shelter. However, the much-needed love and care of loved ones are often missing, as outsiders cannot provide the same comfort. Despite this, it is interesting and even touching to talk to the residents of these homes, as they recount their life experiences. The elderly residents of these homes are a diverse group of people, both men and women, who have come from various backgrounds and walks of life. They have different stories to share, but all of them have one thing in common - they are in the twilight years of their lives and are in need of love, care, and support. Nevertheless, the increasing number of old age homes in India is a matter of concern, given the country's unique traditional and cultural values compared to other Western countries. It is essential to understand the reasons behind this trend, and to develop effective solutions that address the needs of the elderly population in India.

Methods and Materials

The present study aimed to investigate the factors that compel elderly individuals to reside in old age homes in India. The study was conducted in Kanpur and Lucknow, in four old age homes, and included a sample of 300 respondents. To gather information from elderly individuals, a self developed questionnaire was used for the study.

The inclusion criteria for the study were as follows: (a) elderly individuals aged 60 years and above who were living in old age homes and able to communicate, (b) individuals

who had been residing in the old age homes for six months or more, (c) those who could understand, comprehend, and respond to questions, and (d) those who had given written informed consent to participate in the study. These criteria were carefully selected to ensure that the study participants were able to provide accurate and reliable information about their experiences living in old age homes. The study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the reasons behind the shift of elderly individuals to old age homes in India.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to their background characteristics

S. No			Frequency	Percent
1	Age	60-68	52	17.3
		68-76	109	36.3
		76-85	139	46.4
		Total	300	100.0
2	Gender	Male	206	68.7
		Female	94	31.3
		Total	300	100.0
3	Marital status	Single	04	1.3
		Married	62	20.7
		Widowed/ widower	234	78.0
		Total	300	100.0
4	Caste	General	131	43.7
		OBC	86	28.7
		SC	83	27.6
		Total	300	100.0

The age of an individual is a significant factor to consider when studying elderly individuals living in old age homes, as it has a profound impact on their personality and behavior. Aging brings about changes in both physical and psychological abilities, making elderly individuals more dependent on others. Thus, age assumes great significance when studying this population. The distribution of study participants based on their age. The data reveals that 17.3 percent of the respondents were in the age group of 60-68

years, whereas 36.3 percent of them were aged between 68-76 years. The highest percentages of respondents, 46.4 percent, were aged above 76-85 years. The data presented in the table is in line with general beliefs that elderly individuals are not considered an asset to the family. As individuals age, their physical and psychological abilities deteriorate, making them more dependent on others. As a result, elderly individuals and their family members often neglect or reject the helpless elderly population.

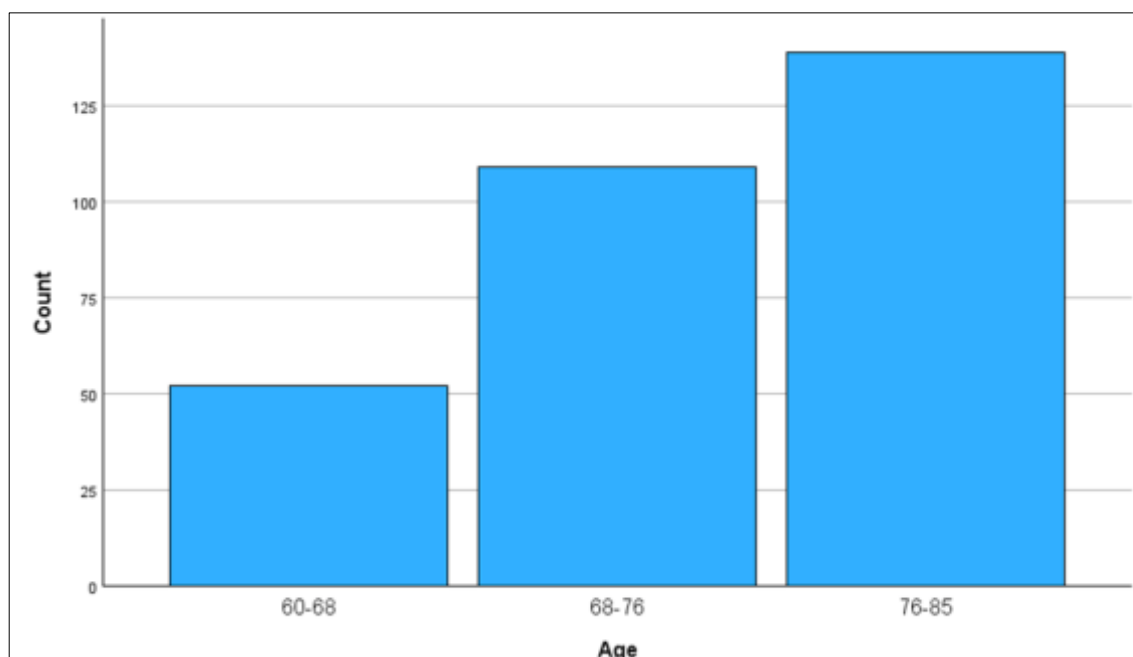


Fig 1: Distribution of the respondents according to age

Table 1 provides information on the gender distribution of respondents, revealing that 68.7 percent were male, while only 31.3 percent were female. These results indicate that there were fewer female respondents than male respondents. The findings support the common belief that females tend to play a more significant role in domestic chores than males, and, as a result, male elderly individuals are often seen as a burden on the family. Traditionally, male elderly individuals acted as the head of the family. However, as individuals age, the number of elderly persons acting as heads of the family decreases significantly. The eldest son typically takes up the position of head of the family, resulting in role reversal and multiple problems for the elderly (Kumar. S.V., 2016) [6].

Marriage is a significant institution in India and is considered an essential aspect of human life. It is a social, religious, spiritual, and legal union of two individuals. The marital status of respondents is crucial in understanding their social behavior, personality development, social problems, and

socialization. Table 1 depicts the marital status of the study participants. The data analysis reveals that 78.00 percent of the respondents were widows and widowers, while only 20.7 percent were married. Unmarried respondents accounted for only 1.3 percent of the total sample. The marital status of elderly individuals significantly influences their lifestyle, as the death of a spouse in old age brings about a challenging time in the individual's life. The living partner must face all the problems of old age without a support system.

Table 1 depicts that 43.7 percent of the respondents were from General caste, while 28.7 percent of the respondents were from backward caste and 27.7 percent of the respondents were from SC caste. In the upper caste majority of the people are educated. Majority of the upper caste people migrate themselves from one place to another place for searching of job. In that situation, they left behind their parents. After that their parents feel more insecure and loneliness.

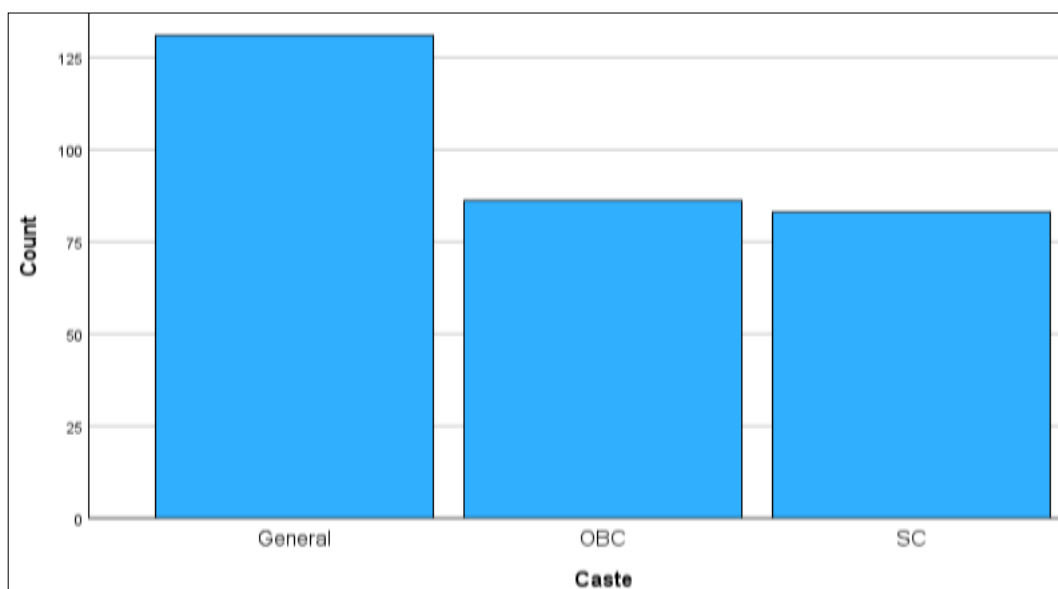


Fig 2: Distribution of the respondents according to caste

Table 2: Distribution and comparison of respondents according to the reasons of shifting in old age homes

S. No	Reasons of shifting in old age homes	Kanpur n=150	Lucknow n=150	Total	X ²	S/NS
1.	I feel alone				1.397	NS
	a) Yes	86(28.6)	96(32.0)	182(60.6)		
	b) No	64(21.4)	54(18.0)	118(39.4)		
	Total			300		
2.	Settlement of children in abroad				0.072	NS
	a) Yes	36(12.0)	38(12.6)	74(24.6)		
	b) No	114(38.0)	112(37.4)	226(75.4)		
	Total			300		
3.	Misbehavior of son and daughter-in-law				67.892*	S
	a) Yes	103(34.4)	32(10.6)	135(45.0)		
	b) No	47(15.6)	118(39.4)	165(55.0)		
	Total			300		
4.	Adjustment problem				2.523	NS
	a) Yes	106(35.3)	93(31.1)	199(66.4)		
	b) No	44(14.4)	57(19.2)	101(33.6)		
	Total			300		
5.	Life threats from children				88.727*	S
	a) Yes	8(0.30)	83(28.6)	91(28.9)		
	b) No	142(47.6)	67(23.5)	209(71.1)		
	Total			300		
6.	Children do not want to psychiatric/physical illness				2.277	NS
	a) a)Yes	29(1.00)	40(17.7)	69(18.7)		
	b) b)No	121(42.1)	110(39.2)	231(81.3)		
	Total			300		

7.	Unable to tolerate interference of family members				3.874*	S
	a) Yes	61(20.3)	78(26.00)	139(46.3)		
	b) No	89(29.6)	72(24.1)	161(53.7)		
	Total			300		
8.	I have no financial support/poverty				22.4898*	S
	a) Yes	78(26.0)	38(12.6)	116(38.6)		
	b) No	72(24.00)	112(37.4)	184(61.4)		
	Total			300		
9.	Wanted independent peaceful life				82.580*	S
	a) Yes	98(32.8)	21(0.7)	119(33.5)		
	b) No	52(18.7)	129(47.8)	181(66.5)		
	Total			300		
10.	Nuclear family system				2.615	NS
	a) Yes	70(23.3)	84(28.0)	154(51.3)		
	b) No	80(26.6)	66(22.1)	146(48.7)		
	Total			300		
11.	Homelessness				39.610*	S
	a) Yes	31(10.3)	84(28.0)	115(38.3)		
	b) No	119(39.6)	66(22.1)	185(61.7)		
	Total			300		
12.	Self- satisfaction				.013	NS
	a) Yes	68(22.6)	67(22.3)	135(44.9)		
	b) No	82(27.5)	83(27.6)	165(55.1)		
	Total			300		
13.	No care taker at home				22.779*	S
	a) Yes	64(21.3)	105(35.0)	169(56.3)		
	b) No	86(28.6)	45(15.1)	131(43.7)		
	Total			300		
14.	Death of spouse				3.419	NS
	a) Yes	86(28.6)	70(23.3)	156(51.9)		
	b) No	64(21.5)	80(26.6)	114(48.1)		
	Total			300		

S=significant

NS=Non-significant

Table 2 presents the results of the Pearson Chi-Square tests conducted to determine the factors affecting elderly residents in old age homes in Kanpur and Lucknow. The tests were conducted on various factors, and the statistically significant findings are discussed below: Therefore, it can be concluded that misbehavior by sons and daughters-in-law is more prevalent as a reason for elderly individuals in Kanpur to move to old age homes than those in Lucknow. Regarding the perception of life threats from children, the percentage of respondents citing this reason in Kanpur was only 0.30%, while in Lucknow; it was significantly higher at 28.6%. The chi-square test yielded a value of 88.727, indicating a significant difference between the two cities ($p < 0.05$). Thus, it appears that the perception of life threats from children is more widespread as a reason for elderly individuals in Lucknow to relocate to old age homes than those in Kanpur. The chi-square test yielded a value of 3.874, indicating a significant difference between the two cities ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, it seems that the inability to tolerate interference from family members is a common reason for elderly individuals in both Kanpur and Lucknow to move to old age homes. The chi-square test yielded a value of 22.4898, indicating a significant difference between the two cities ($p < 0.05$). Hence, it can be inferred that the lack of financial support or poverty is more common as a reason for elderly individuals in Kanpur to relocate to old age homes than those in Lucknow. The chi-square test yielded a value of 82.580, indicating a significant difference between the two cities ($p < 0.05$). Thus, it appears that the desire for an independent, peaceful life is more prevalent as a reason for elderly individuals in Kanpur to move to old age homes than those in Lucknow. The chi-square test yielded a value of 39.610,

indicating a significant difference between the two cities ($p < 0.05$). Hence, it can be concluded that homelessness is more prevalent as a reason for elderly individuals in Lucknow to relocate to old age homes than those in Kanpur. A chi-square test for independence uncovered a significant difference in the proportion of individuals without a caretaker at home between Kanpur and Lucknow, with a chi-square value of 22.779 ($p < 0.05$).

Similarly findings were reported significant differences in several factors affecting elderly residents, including family dynamics, threats, economic status, and living conditions. These findings underscore the importance of comprehending and addressing specific challenges faced by elderly individuals in various locations. The elderly stage of life is widely considered the most difficult, making it crucial to prioritize the maintenance of happiness, satisfaction, and peace for individuals within this age group (Finlay & Finn, 2020; Harrington, 2019; McGrath *et al.*, 2017) [3, 4, 8]. A positive outlook can be maintained by engaging in recreational and extracurricular activities, such as watching television, listening to music, participating in sports, games, and even singing devotional or other types of songs (Saint-Jacques *et al.*, 2016; Wayne, 2019) [11, 12]. The responsibility of ensuring that elderly individuals receive adequate care falls on family members in-home settings and staff members in old age homes (S.-j. Lee & Ahn, 2013; Newman *et al.*, 2021) [7]. In addition to physical care, elderly individuals require social interaction, and it is crucial to make them feel valued and respected, rather than burdensome (Wayne, 2019) [12]. Elderly individuals possess a wealth of knowledge about effective ways to live life and should be consulted when an individual requires advice and guidance (Huang, 2018) [5]. Various

factors contribute to the admission of individuals into old age homes, including aging, difficulties in carrying out household chores, mistreatment and exploitation by family members, and loneliness. While old age homes provide appropriate facilities, elderly individuals may face challenges regarding adjustment and familiarization with the environment and people around them (Bowes, Avan, & Macintosh, 2012; Clark-Kazak, 2009; S.-j. Lee & Ahn, 2013) ^[1, 2, 7]. Despite developing new friendships, elderly individuals may feel excluded without their family members, leading to depression (Harrington, 2019; Huang, 2018; Y.-H. Lee, 2018) ^[4, 5, 7]. The significant challenges faced by elderly individuals include isolation, loneliness, socio-economic status, generational gap, adjustment problems, and transformations within social roles. As such, it is vital to address these challenges and provide adequate support to elderly individuals in different locations.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Pearson Chi-Square tests used to assess the variables influencing senior citizens' decisions to move into retirement communities in Kanpur and Lucknow provide detailed insights into the socio-cultural dynamics at play. First off, there appears to be different family dynamics and structures in the two locations based on the striking difference in the frequency of misbehavior by sons and daughters-in-law as a cause for relocation. The higher frequency of this feature in Kanpur suggests that care giving tasks may be prioritized differently due to cultural norms or perhaps strained familial connections. On the other hand, the older population in Lucknow perceives children as posing a greater risk to their lives, which raises questions about safety and even generational disputes within the society. These issues may have their origins in Lucknow's distinct socioeconomic or cultural circumstances. Additionally, although both cities share the experience of being unable to accept family involvement as a cause for moving, the degree to which this factor influences relocation may differ depending on the socio-cultural norms and support networks present in each city. The increased frequency of this feature in Kanpur raises the possibility that older inhabitants are being forced to seek shelter in old age facilities due to a lack of social support or alternative care giving arrangements. Furthermore, the disproportionate effect that poverty and a lack of financial support have on Kanpur's senior population highlights the socioeconomic divide that exists in the city, which may be made worse by restricted access to social welfare programs and support systems. On the other hand, Lucknow's greater rate of homelessness as a cause for relocation might be a reflection of more general structural problems like urbanization, a shortage of cheap homes, or social isolation among senior citizens. Lastly, a major motivator for senior citizens in Kanpur appears to be the desire for a self-sufficient, tranquil life. This could be an indication of a desire for autonomy and a high standard of living, which may be impacted by things like access to healthcare services, community support, and family ties. Overall, these results highlight how crucial it is to take into account the complex interactions between socio-cultural, economic, and family issues when attempting to explain why older people choose to move into assisted living facilities.

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