



PROBLEMS OF AGED PEOPLE IN RURAL COMMUNITIES OF ASSAM: A case study in Lakhimpur District

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ABSTRACT

The population of the old people of 60- plus age is estimated to be about 60 million in India. Most of the elderly people live in villages as India's population has rural bias. With the disintegration of joint family system and changes in social values, social structure and economy resulting from industrialization, urbanization and impact of western culture, the traditional forms of family role expectation are changing. Children now neglect the aged parents and they feel unwanted. The generation gap is widening and children find it difficult to adjust with their elderly parents. The coping capacities of the younger and aged family members are now being challenged under various circumstances resulting in neglect and abuse of aged parents in many ways, both within the family and outside the family. Therefore the care of aged people has emerged as an important issue. Hence the investigator made an attempt to find out the problems faced by the aged people so that practical solution can be made. One Hundred twenty (120) respondents were randomly selected from the villages of Azad panchyat of Lakhimpur development block and interviewed regarding their problems. Majority of them (96.7%) suffer from diseases like joint pain, Blood Pressure, diabetes, Dementia, neurological problems etc, 54.2% respondents faced economic problems and 44.2% respondents have emotional problems. The study reveals that majority of aged people were unhappy in their lives due to qurrell for property among their children, lack of care, rough behaviour from the children etc.

Key words: Aged people, problems, communities, emotional, economic

INTRODUCTION:

Old age refers to ages nearing or surpassing the life expectancy of human beings and the end of the human life cycle. WHO defines aged people are those whose age are 60 years or above. The population of the old people of 60- plus age is estimated to be about 60 million in India. Globally, the population of ageing is rapidly increasing. Between 2015 and 2050, the proportion of the world's population over 60 years will nearly double, from 12% to 22% ⁽¹⁾. The old age is classified in terms of Young-Old for 60 to 69, Old-Old for 70 to 79 and Oldest Old for 80 to 89. In the Indian context, the age of 60 years has been adopted as the age of retirement in government sector. It has been seen that most of the elderly people live in villages as India's population has rural bias. They commanded a great respect due to traditional norms and values of rural society. The total volume of knowledge that existed in the form of folklore, mythologies, riddles and folk songs etc. could be handed down to the younger generation by the aged through the medium of oral tradition. For this reason aged people is an important element governing social status and privileges in the family. But due to industrialization, urbanization, technological changes, disintegration of joint family system and changes in social values, structure and economy, the aged people who are looked upon as an idle of respect has gone through strenuous time. With increasing strain of new type of activities many traditional forms of family role expectation are changing. Now their life is a means of deprivation. The main problems emerging to them are due to negligence of the family. The younger generation finds bitterness in the wisdom of predecessors. They now trends to be more independence on certain issues. They don't want to be controlled by their aged parents. The misunderstanding between them is increasing. Children now neglect the aged parents and they feel unwanted. The generation gap is widening and children find it difficult to adjust with their aged parents. The coping capacities of the younger and aged family members are now being challenged under various circumstances resulting in neglect and abuse of aged parents in many ways, both within the family and outside the family. Therefore the care of aged people has emerged as an important issue. Several studies has been carried out regarding problems of aging. In a study conducted by Chandha and Sinha (1997) found that the most problematic areas of aged is health, followed by psychological, financial and social problems. K.Sukhpal etal (2019) carried out a study on daily life problems faced by elderly in a north indian city. No such type of study has been carried out

yet in lakhimpur district of assam speacially in rural areas. Therefore the investigator carried out this study with the following objectives:

OBJECTIVES:

1. To know the background information of aged people
2. To understand the scenario of family care for aged people
3. To know the major problems of aged people

Methodology:

The area selected for the study was Azad Gram panchayat of Lakhimpur Development block of Lakhimpur district. The villages is predominantly occupied by peoples of various caste population. There are ten villages in Azad panchayat. Twelve (12) aged people from these 10 villages were randomly selected constituted the total sample size of 120 respondents.

Prior to the commencement of the interview, the study participants were carefully briefed regarding the purpose of the study so as to obtain their full co-operation for the study. House-to-house visit were conducted and interviewed the both male and female aged people of the family who are present at the time of survey.

Results and Discussions:

Background Information of respondents:

A total of 120 respondents were interviewed from 120 household. Among them 57.5% were male and 42.5% were female. All the population belong to Hindu religion. Most of them (65%) completed primary level where as only 35% were high school and above. Most of the aged parents (65.8%) were belonged with the family and care taken to them by in-laws and 34.2% aged person lived alone in the home. Their son/ daughters are doing the services outside the district. The findings are represents in the following table 1:

Table 1: Back ground information

Sl.No	Factors	Frequency	Percentage
1	Male	69	57.5%
2	Female	51	42.5%
3	Widow	8	15.7%
4	Widower	11	16%
5	Educational status		
	Upto primary level	78	65%
	H.S and above	42	35%
6	Live with other family members	79	65.8%
	Live alone in home	41	34.2%

Problems of Aged people:

The aged who looked upon as a respect and superiority and whose honour is synonymous with the honour of the community are now suffered from numerous problems. With the rapid changes in society and the emergence of nuclear families, the aged are now suffer from emotional, physical and financial insecurity. Followings table shows the problems that aged people faces in our society.

Table 2 : Problems of Aged people

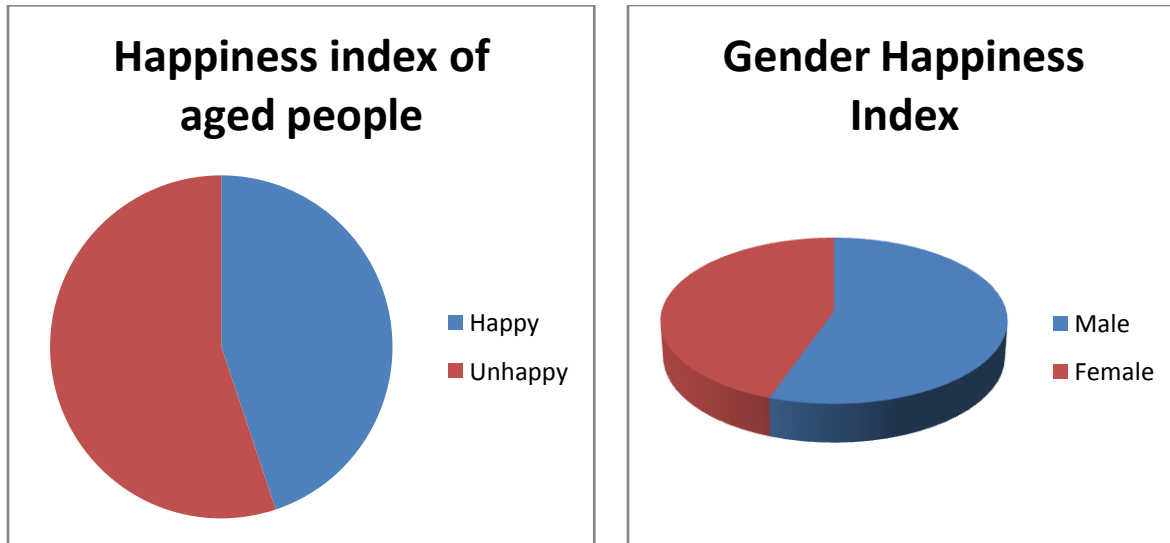
Sl. No	Factors	Frequency	Percentage
1	Emotional Problems		
	Family Support	67	55.8%
	Without Family support	53	44.2%
2	Economic Problems		
	Financially secure	55	45.8%
	Fanacially not secured	65	54.2%
3	Health Problems		
	Suffer from diseases	116	96.7%
	Free from disease	4	3.3%

From the above table It was found that majority of aged people in rural assam i.e. 55.8% received family support. They lived with their son and other family member. 44.2% of aged were lived alone. Further 45.8% aged people were financially secured. They were from wealthy family and retired person and they get pension from government. Another 54.2% aged people were financially not secured. They belongs to farmer family, they have no pension and their children are incapable to look after them. Majority of them i.e. 96.7% faced the health problems like joint pain, Blood Pressure, diabetes, dementia, neurological problems etc. and although only 3.3% were free from these type of diseases but still they suffer from age-based disease like cough, fever etc.

Gender Happiness Index:

During investigation, it was discussed with the respondents about their happy and unhappy feelings of leaving. It was found that 86 out of 120 aged people were unhappy in their lives. Among them 49 were male and 37 were female. The study reveals that 71.7% aged people are unhappy. Among them 57% are male and 43% are female.

This unhappiness is because of qurrell for property among their children, lack of care, rough behaviour from the children etc. Espicially the widow and widower face that kind of family problems.



Conclusion and Suggestions:

In view of the increasing need for intervention in the area of old age welfare, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, adopted a 'National Policy on Older Persons' in January 1999. The policy provides specific facilities,

concessions, relief and services and helping them to cope with problems associated with old age. In Assam also, the 126-member assembly passed a bill seeking to deduct a fraction of the salary of state government employees for the benefit of their aged parents in case they do not want to support them. This is known as the Assam Employees PRANAM Bill which aimed at ensuring that employees do not neglect their parents in times of need. The bill has provisions for deducting 10% of an employee's pay and transferring it to the account of the parents if they need. In spite of these, there is a great need for proper care and protection to aged people in the changing scenario. Following suggestions may go a long way in changing the life of aged in our society.

- Traditional values, moral values should be reinforced in school curricula and through the media.
- Provides free medical health check-up camps programme to rural areas are necessitate to reach out to the aged who have particularly no health care facilities near their reach.
- The regular task and discussion should be organized to create a sense of security among them.
- Awareness should be created among younger generation to preserve our old age tradition of love and care for the elder both in the family and the community.

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