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Status of Aged People in Tribal Community

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Abstract

Problem of ageing is appearing as a major issue in modern age because the improvement of medical science has raised the life expectancy of the people. As a result, the number of old age people is increasing all over the world. According to UNESCO estimate the number of old people aged above 60+ in the world is likely to go up from 350 million in 1975 to 590 million in 2005. About half of them are in the developing countries. In the advanced countries like Norway, Sweden and Japan the population of the aged above 60 is 20 per cent. However, the percentage of the aged in other advanced countries in the West is in the neighbourhood of 14 Per cent. So far as India is concerned as a result of the change in the age composition of the population over time, there has been a progressive increase in both the number and proportion of aged people. The proportion of the population aged 60 years or more has been increasing consistently over the last century, particularly after 1951. In 1901 the proportion of the population aged 60 or over of India was about 5 percent, which marginally increased to 5.4 percent in 1951, and by 2001 this share was found to have risen to about 7.4 percent. About 75% of persons of age 60 and above reside in rural areas.

The Status of the aged not only differ between younger and olds but also from country to county on the socio-cultural background. Venkoba Rao (1979) has indicated that as to how the prevalent cultural conditions are affecting or contributing to the problems of the aged. Ghosal (1962) has observed that the problems of old age tend to be multiple rather than single. Due to the multiple natures being observed in the old age causes different problems. Based on these types of problems vary between tribes and non-tribes.

Keywords: Aged People, Old age, Elderly, Tribes, Tribal Community

1. Introduction

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Tribes are facing lot of problems than non-tribes, in this context researcher chosen this study to find out the problems of old age people in tribal community in Kodaikanal hills in Dindigul district of Tamilnadu. The Paliyan tribes are illiterate and highly ignorant and gullible. They are ignorant as well as unaware of the day-to-day happenings not being assertive enough to grasp the opportunities that are offered by the Government. They evade assimilation and joining the mainstream of society. They lack of confidence and they have competitive spirit. The occupations they engaged in are seasonal and fetch meager income. They are not in a position to provide education to their children and are not able to avail of better medical facilities. They have to Labour Day and night to earn their daily bread.

A scientific method of study is necessary to gain knowledge of the problem of a study. In order to make the present study a scientific one the researcher followed certain research procedures. The present study is an attempt to analyse what are the problems existing among the aged tribal persons and how the attitudes of the member of the society affect the old age people. The research methodology adopted in this study intends to explain the problems of elderly tribal persons in Kodaikanal hills at Dindigul District.

2. Objectives

1. To analyze the socio-economic background of the old age people in tribal community.
2. To examine the economic hurdles of the respondents.
3. To understand the Physical and Psychological problems of the respondents.

3. Research Design

The purpose of this research design is to describe the problems and other units under investigation like socio-economic background of the respondents, and elicit new information about the elderly tribal persons in the study area through the objectives. Hence, the researcher has been adopted descriptive research design.

4. Area of the study

Based on the data available with the Government regarding the numerical concentration of the Paliyan tribals at Kodaikanal hill in Tamilnadu is high. Hence, Kodaikanal hill has been selected for the present study.

5. Sampling

50 respondents have been interviewed by the researcher using simple random sampling through lottery method.

6. Tools and techniques of data collection

Structured interview schedule has been used for the collection of primary data from the selected respondents in Kodaikanal Hills.

7. Data Processing and Interpretation

The simple percentage frequency tables were drawn. The data were correlated and crossed with the variables by using SPSS, etc. and tables were interpreted. The observations made during data collections were helpful to interpret the data.

8. Major Findings

8.1 Socio-economic background of the old age people in tribal community

- Regarding age wise classification of respondents a good number (32%) of them belonged to the age group between 60-64 years, 28 per cent of them come under the age group of 65-69 years, 28 per cent of the respondents fall under the age group of 70-74, 8 per cent of them were under the age group of 75-79 years and 4 per cent of them were above 80 years old.
- Gender wise analysis of the respondents shows that vast majorities (56 per cent) of the respondents are males and remaining 44 per cent of them are females.
- When the educational status of the elderly respondents was analysed, it was found that there were more of illiterate (88 per cent), and a few of the (12 per cent) respondents completed only primary level education. It is observed that most of the respondents were uneducated due to non-availability of school in the study area for the past few decades.
- It is found that 78 per cent of tribal people are living in huts or Thatched house at interior forest area, 20 per cent of the respondents residing at Pucca house these types of houses are made up of sand, stone, wood and leaf, and remaining 2 per cent of the respondents are living in concrete house.
- It is found from the study that majority of the respondents depend mainly on agriculture (42 per cent) and also depend on agricultural coolie works for livelihood.
- The income of the respondents highlighted that high number (40 per cent) of the respondents were earning Rs. 1001 to 2000 per month and remaining 28 per cent of the respondents were getting Rs. 2001 to 3000 per month.

- It is observed that 44 per cent of the respondents do not get financial support from anybody among their family members; they were leading their life from their own income. 30 per cent of the respondents get financial support from their daughters. 14 per cent of the respondents are getting financial support from their spouse and remaining 12 per cent of the respondents are receiving from their sons.
- The inference drawn from the analysis is that female children were taking care of their parents during illness in the lost stage of elderly tribes. 46 per cent of the respondents stated that their daughter had taken care of their health and gave the moral support during the illness.
- It is observed that (54 per cent) of the respondents are getting food from their children, and then 30 per cent of the respondents are getting medical assistance from their children.

8.2 Factors and Extent of Problems among the Old Age People

Based on the objective 'factors and extent of problems among the elderly tribals' the researcher finds factors and major problems of elderly tribals in respect of their age, sex, dependency ratio, etc. and the conditions of the aged in respect of their economic dependency, number of dependants, living arrangements, persons supporting the aged, physical immobility, etc. The results obtained from the research are presented in this section.

- The results based on the information that classified male and female respondent's statement: 22 per cent of the respondents stated that they have excellent health conditions, 14 per cent 8 per cent respectively. 38 per cent of the respondents were having the some physical problems and they were depending on others for all their needs.
- In this modern medicine era, 46 per cent of the respondents are following community medicine for their physical illness like, fever, cold, jaundice and other problems from primitive period.
- It is observed from the field that vast majority (86 per cent) of the respondents have some kind of Physical problems like gastro intestinal disease, chronic constipation, chronic headache, joint pain, loss of vision, loss of hearing. These problems occurred due to food habits, climate condition and ageing factor. In addition, remaining 14 per cent of the respondents stated that they have no physical problems; they can do their day-to-day activities and their occupations without any difficulties. Malnutrition, as expected, is the most common health problem among the tribals. In addition, they suffered from communicable diseases such as tuberculosis and malaria. Some tribal groups are also at high risk for sickle cell anemia. Generally tribal diets are seen to be deficient in protein, iron, iodine, and vitamins.
- It is frequently assumed that ageing is more a passive and positive experience in tribal cultures based on hunting, agriculture, rearing animals etc. 30 per cent of the 70-74 age group respondents were affected by physical problems like, gastro intestinal disease, chronic constipation, chronic headache, joint pain, loss of hearing, loss of vision and etc. 34 per cent of the 60-64 age group respondents suffered from various economical problems. 36 per cent of the 70-74 age group

respondents had experienced the psychological problems like, ill-treatment and un-care of their family members.

- 60 per cent of the agricultural coolie workers have the physical problems. 62 per cent of the agricultural coolie workers have economic problems. And 60 per cent of the agricultural coolie workers have psychological problems. These three major problems affect the agricultural coolies only. Because they were getting very low income, they cannot consume healthy food, and they do not get proper respect from the society.
- Regarding visual or eye sight problems 38 per cent of the respondents have visual problems. They lost their visions by Retinal detachment, Diabetic retinopathy, senile muscular degeneration, Retinal defects, Excessive dryness, Excessive tears, Glaucoma, Cataract.
- The majority (62 per cent) of the respondents were satisfied with their family income. They can fulfill the basic needs of the day-to-day life by their family income and they were working as agricultural coolies.
- It is observed that half (50 per cent) of the respondents feel uncomfortable with their family members regarding respect and love. In addition to loss of respect, 36 per cent were not having food along with family members. And 20 per cent of respondents stated that 'no-income' is problem for loss of their respect in the family.
- The majority of the respondents at all the level of age group (36 per cent) are able to perform their daily activities with some difficulties while 24 per cent of their daily works due to some physical illness.

9. Conclusion

The in-depth analysis of the problems and its extent faced by the elders revealed that tribal elders under study are more prone to be affected by physical, economical and psychological problems. Taking into account the nature of geographical location of the target and way of life, sources of livelihood have forced the poor elders to lead miserable life in the rest of their lives. As there is no alternative employment and their increasing age factors have become instrumental behind perpetuating their poor economic life. Problems of the aged anywhere is unavoidable. It is nature's course of action; some problems can be solved with utilization of medical advancement and increasing economic position. But, the life of elders in hill area and their ever increasing problems remain the same despite taking steps to alleviate them.

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