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Reasons for living of elderly people in old age homes: an exploratory study

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Abstract

Now-a-days, many old-age homes have been established from government as well as other organizations in Nepal. Why elderly people have to reside in old age homes? It was the research question of the research study. The objective of this study was to explore the factors compelling elderly people to reside in old age homes. This study was carried out on 22 elderly residing in Devghat Old-Age Homes, Tanahu, Nepal. Factors responsible for their settlement in OAHs were explored using interview method. Loneliness (31.8%), poverty (27.3%) and having no son/daughter (27.3%) were found to be most common reasons for residing in old-age home. Many elderly people in Nepal are opting old-age homes as their place of stay in their later life. Foreseeing the future the government and voluntary agencies in Nepal must make arrangements for institutional support and care for the elderly.

Keywords: ageing, elderly people, old-age homes, reasons

1. Introduction

Ageing in fact is a continuous and universal process which is progressive in nature. Yadav states, "Ageing is a continuous, universal, progressive, intrinsic, and deleterious process. It is distinct from the physical and mental retardation caused by any other reasons like diseases, disability or any superficial causes" (2012, p. 48). As soon as a man is born, ageing starts. Ageing is a natural phenomenon and an inevitable process. It is a process of gradual change in physical appearance and mental status that cause a person to grow old. As the birth is an event and the pregnancy a process of it, similarly old age is an event and ageing is its process (Subba & Subba, 2015, p. 28) ^[13]. Old age is the age of long life experience. The Mental sufferings encountered during this period due to health problems, sorrows caused by departure from beloved ones, doubt concerning the nature of present and next life thus pose a great challenge for their sustenance. Kumari and his colleagues write about old-age, "Old age means reduced physical ability, declining mental ability, the gradual giving up of role playing in socio-economic activities, and a shift in economic status moving from economic independence to economic dependence upon other's for support" (2016, p. 5). The definition of ageing varies from chronological, biological and psychological aspects. Ageing could account for chronological ageing which enumerates the number of years of lives of a person since birth. Similarly ageing also accounts for biological changes, which are more of physical in nature. The symptoms like wrinkles, greying of hair etc. is observed. Ageing also can be perceived psychologically. The change in thinking patterns, memory, learning, intelligence and personality also changes with age (Dangi, 2016, p. 20) ^[5]. Also, there is sociological ageing which accounts for change in social roles over time of a person (Dangi, 2016; Danan, Mathew, & David, 2009) ^[4]. The Senior Citizen Act (2003) of Nepal defines senior citizen or elderly population as people who have completed the age of sixty years (Government of Nepal, 2006; Dangi, 2016) ^[5]. According to the act, the standard age for senior citizen is fixed to be 60 years, the retirement age or being considered older varies according to profession in Nepal (Adhikari, 2013, p. 73; Dangi, 2016, p. 21) ^[5].

With demographic transition life expectancy is increasing all over the world. "Over the last 5 decades, the total fertility rate of the world has decreased from 5 to 2.7. This process of reduction in fertility rate has helped to increase the share of working class population and older population in the world" (Dangi, 2016, p. 20; Mujahid & Siddhisena, 2009) ^[5, 11]. Also,

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within five decades the overall average life expectancy has grown from 46.5 years to 66.5 years. And by 2050, it is expected that the world's life expectancy increases by 10 years and be 76 years by 2045- 2050. If we look at the global share of the older population in the world population, we see that it has increased from 9.2 percent in 1990 to 11.7 percent in 2013 and by 2050, it is anticipated to reach 21.1 percent of the global population. As a result, there will be a shift in the population distribution in the world (Mujahid & Siddhisena, 2009; Dangi, 2016) [5, 11]. The fertility rate in South Asia remained high during 1950s and 1960s. However, during the late 1960s the fertility rate in South Asia started declining. Declined fertility rate was accompanied by improvement in life expectancy. If we look at the trend of life expectancy over a period of 50 years starting from 1950 to 2000, a gradual increment from 40 to 65 can be observed. Fifteen percent of total old age population is from eight South Asian countries. This proportion is anticipated to increase to 22-28 percent of the world population by 2050 (Mujahid & Siddhisena, 2009; Dangi, 2016) [5, 11].

In Nepal according to 2011 census, there were 2.1 million elderly inhabitants, which make up to 8.1 percent of the total population in Nepal (Shrestha, 2012, p. 144) [12]. The life expectancy in Nepal has increased from 27 years in 1950 to 60 years by 2001 i.e. life expectancy in Nepal has doubled in 50 years (Chalise, 2006, p. 354) [3]. Moreover in ten year period from 1991 to 2001, the increment rate of elderly population was 3.39% which was higher than the population growth rate which was 2.3 percent (Shrestha, 2012) [12]. In the Nepali tradition, sons and daughter in law are supposed to take care of their parents when they get old. About 80% of the elderly people live with their sons and daughters in law (Geriatric Center Nepal, 2010) [6]. However, along with modernization and westernization, situation is changing and people are starting to live in old age homes. It is estimated that about 85% of the Nepalese elderly live in rural areas (Geriatric Center Nepal, 2010; Dangi, 2016) [6, 5]. Most of the elderly in old age are responsible to take care of grandchildren, cattle herding, religious activities and so on. As already mentioned in the introduction part, many elderly people in Nepal are suffering from depression, loneliness (Geriatric Center Nepal, 2010; Dangi, 2016) [6, 5] and physical diseases like gastritis, hypertension, arthritis and infections (Khanal & Gautam, 2011; Dangi, 2016) [5]. It was found that the prevalence of depression was 53.2% according to Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS) among which 34.2 % was mild and 19 % was severe depression (Khattri & Nepal, 2006); similarly, 54% of the people living in old age homes reported that they had at least one physical disease. Prevalence of disease was higher in females and people in the age group 70-79 years (Khanal & Gautam, 2011). A large scale study performed with the purpose to assess the needs of elderly people in Pharping, Kathmandu district of Nepal found that three fourths of studied male reported physical pain (back, joints, knee). Similarly, those reporting respiratory disease, eye problem and gastritis were

39%, 30% and 29% respectively (Bista, Pathak, Subedi, Shakya, & Gautam, 2012).

Table 1: Ageing situation of Nepal, 1961-2011

Census year	Male%	Female%
1961	4.8	5.6
1971	5.3	5.9
1981	5.9	5.5
1991	5.9	5.7
2001	6.4	6.3
2011	6.8	7.1

Source: (Yadav, 2012)

The above Table shows that the ageing situation of Nepal from 1961 to 2011. According to the mentioned table, in 1961 there were 4.8% male and 5.6% females, in 1971 it was increased to 5.3% male and 5.9% female, in 1981 there were 5.9% male and 5.5% female, in 1991 there were 5.9% male and 5.7% female, in 2001, 6.4% were male and 6.3% female, so on in 2011, 6.8% were male and 7.1% female. These results show that in every ten years elderly people are being increased.

Nepal, like many other under developing and developing countries in the world, is witnessing the rapid growth of ageing population. There are different factors like urbanization, modernization and globalization that have led to change in the economic structure, the erosion of societal values, weakening of social values, and social institutions such as the joint family. In this changing economic and social situation, the younger generation is searching for new identities encompassing economic independence and redefined social roles within, as well as outside, the family. The changing economic structure has reduced the dependence of rural families on land which has provided strength to bonds between generations. Ageing population is one of the most discussed global phenomena in the present century.

2. Objective

To explore reasons for living of elderly people in old age homes

3. Hypothesis

There is no significant reason for living of elderly people in old age homes

4. Methodology

The study area was old-age homes of Devghat, Tanahu, Nepal. The study was cross sectional based on explorative method. The respondents were elderly citizens who were staying in old-age homes. Purposive sampling method was used. Total 22 samples were selected, among them 14 were females and 8 were males.

5. Findings

The following table shows the demographic status of respondents.

Table 2: Demographic status of respondents

Age		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	60-69	4	18.2	18.2	18.2
	70-79	3	13.6	13.6	31.8
	80 & above	15	68.2	68.2	100.0
	Total	22	100.0	100.0	
Ethnicity		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent

Valid	Brahmin	17	77.3	77.3	77.3
	Janajati	3	13.6	13.6	90.9
	Thakuri	2	9.1	9.1	100.0
	Total	22	100.0	100.0	
Gender		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	8	36.4	36.4	36.4
	Female	14	63.6	63.6	100.0
	Total	22	100.0	100.0	
Marital Status		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Unmarried	6	27.3	27.3	27.3
	Widow/Widower	16	72.7	72.7	100.0
	Total	22	100.0	100.0	
Education		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Illiterate	21	95.5	95.5	95.5
	Up to 8	1	4.5	4.5	100.0
	Total	22	100.0	100.0	
Previous Profession		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agriculture	17	77.3	77.3	77.3
	Labour	5	22.7	22.7	100.0
	Total	22	100.0	100.0	
Land Ownership		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	10	45.5	45.5	45.5
	No	12	54.5	54.5	100.0
	Total	22	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field survey 2018 AD

The above table shows that demographic status of respondents. Out of 22 respondents, there were 4 (18.2%) of 60-69 years, 3 (13.6%) of 70-79 years and 3 (13.6%) of 80 and above. Similarly, the data were taken based on ethnicity of respondents. The frequency of Brahmin is 17 which means 77.3%. The frequency of Janajati is 3 which means 13.6%. The frequency of Thakuri is 2 which means 9.1%. Likewise, among the respondents, there were 8 males and 14 females. The results also show that out of 22 respondents, 6 were unmarried and 16 were widow/widower. The educational status of respondents was such that only 1 had formal education up to grade 8 and remaining 21 were illiterate. There was query about the respondents' previous profession. Out of 22, 17 told that

their previous profession was agriculture and 5 were laborers. Out of total respondents, 10 had their own land but, 12 replied that they did not have their own land.

The above Table 3 shows the causes behind staying in old-age home. Out of 22 respondents, only one reported that because of misbehavior of son and daughter-in law he/she was staying in old-age homes. 6 of them reported that because of poverty or lack of financial support they staying in old-age homes. Similarly, 7 reported as loneliness. Adjustment problem was reported by 1 respondent. 6 respondents reported as no son / daughter. 1 reported to live independently. The major causes behind staying in old-age homes are lack of financial support, loneliness and having no son / daughter.

Table 3: Causes behind staying in old-age home

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Misbehavior of son and daughter in-law	1	4.5	4.5	4.5
	Poverty/ No financial support	6	27.3	27.3	31.8
	Loneliness	7	31.8	31.8	63.6
	Adjustment problem	1	4.5	4.5	68.2
	Having no son/daughter	6	27.3	27.3	95.5
	To live independently	1	4.5	4.5	100.0
	Total	22	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey 2018 A

6. Conclusions and Recommendation:

The researchers' have found the causes behind staying in old-age home at the time of discussion with elder age people. The respondents reported different causes behind staying in old age homes. Among them, the major causes behind staying in old-age homes are lack of financial support, loneliness and having no son / daughter. Respondents have their own problem to stay in old-age home. Such types of research need to do from other old-age homes to find the causes and solutions too.

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