Antecedents of increasing trend of Old Age Homes: An Exploratory Study of Lahore, Pakistan

Ghazanafar Hussain and Saima Manzoor

_____

Author(s) Biography

Ghazanafar Hussain is M Phil. Scholar at Department of Gender Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore

Saima Manzoor is M Phil. Scholar at Department of Gender Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore

ABSTRACT: *Owing to rapid industrialization and economic independency among the decedents, senior citizens are facing problems in their lives. Family patterns are drastically changes; children are less likely to adopt the joint family system to avoid the share of bundle of responsibilities. Decedents are more inclined to adopt nuclear family patterns; an easy away to leave the responsibilities. Resultantly older people feeling loneliness nobody is willing to look after them which leads them to join the shelter homes. The present study is carried out in district Lahore to critically analyze the consequences and socioeconomic factors which leads the old people to reside in the Shelter homes. Sample was comprised on 60 inmates of Shelter Homes in district Lahore. Private and public shelter homes were also selected purposively and sample analyzed through focus group discussions.*

Keywords: Senior Citizens, Loneliness, Family Patterns, Old Age Homes.
_____

Aging is predominantly an older term, closely associated with the existence of the human being in the world. It not only confined with the human beings but other living organism also moved towards aging in their life cycle. Aging refer to the progressive change, but these changes not negative and nor reduce the individual viability (Susan M. Hillier & George M. Barrow 2011). These changes can be psychological, biological as well as the social changes in the life of living beings. The more visible changes are related to the biological in nature, which is associated with age factors at this physical changes destructively occurs, lead towards leaning with fable body structure. While psychological changing's leads towards poor nervous system, or leaser adopting or learning capacities of old people (Scheibe, S. Freund & Baltes 2007).

What is the definition of old age and do the word old age also refers towards elder, seniors, mature older and senior citizen of the society? Susan M.Hillir argues in his book "Old age means different things and is different signed on the basis of chronological order e.g. age 65". He gives an example of a female that she could not use bikini on the beach of sea, when she is too old (Susan M. Hillier & George M. Barrow 2011). With the passage of time, ageing has a rapid increase and there is also number of older persons increased as the number of older persons in 2013 is 841 million, which is more than 1950 as 2002, and it will almost triple by 2050 (Department of Economic and social Affairs, population division, 2013). On the other hand, the population of Pakistan is 184.5 million in 2013 and Pakistan is the sixth most populous country of the world (NIPS, 2013).

In the religion of Islam, a lot of reflection has been shown on taking care and maintenance of their parents and it is apparent to the youngsters that they should be respectful towards their parents. In the Holy Quran it is said that "A mother bear her children in weakness after weakness, calling for paying gratitude to Allah Almightily than to the parents" (Holy Quran 13:14).Pakistani family institution is considered as a basic unit which promotes the social wellbeing of the family. It also culturally influenced in terms of marriage patterns as joint family system is not adopting in modern age. Families are more interested in nuclear pattern having lesser responsibilities and lesser economic burden. Most of the family decisions are headed by male members and they have the right to take all the decisions.

On the other side with the rapid growth of urbanization and globalization, societal family patterns are also affected owing to these transitions. In today's era, families are more inclined to adopt nuclear family patterns. Consequently the lives of senior citizens are more traumatized by this emergent evolution. Working children having busy schedule, they do not have too much time to look after their older parents as the result they feel loneliness at home. Due to the some personal issues in their martial life the new generation take the decision to give their elder in senior citizens home or old age home.

Health and psychological issues are also visible to aging and leads people mobility towards old age homes, families' lack of capacity to cope up with psychological and health issues and improper maintenance of health is also important factor. And, now a day's children neither own their parents and nor they own these responsibilities to look after their older persons in later life (M. Iqbal Malik 2003). There have a lot of researchers has been conducted on old age home as Arunna Dubey and Seema Bhasin conduct a research in which they compare the background profile of the respondents living in old age home and living with their families. They also compare the environment of elderly women living in old age home and within family environment in term of their general feeling social relationships and personal likings (Aruna Dubey & Seema Bhasin). But they do not clearly define their target population in sample frame. On another research which is conduct in context of Punjab, Pakistan. In which the researcher they try to find out the family support for their elder and health status of the elder people (M. Shoaib, Sarfraz khan 2011).

On the other hand a research conduct in the district of KPK in which researcher also interested in the social economic problems and health issues which old people face in their later life. They also argue that most of 13% from their respondents is living live separately because their children leave them due to some issue (Hamid Alam, Farman Ali 2013). And this is the one of the reason which promotes the concept of old age home in Pakistan. They also argue that most of their respondents were economically dependent to their children or any other family member. A Furdos Gulzar and M. Iqbal zafar also interested in the social economic profile of elder people and they also want to know the economic issues which elder people face in their old age life (Furdos Gulzar, M.Iqbal 2008). So that's why in this research we want to find out those consequences which bring the old people in old age home. Due to the Islamic country having a strong family and cultural pattern, why we need these old age homes.

Methodology

The study is based on qualitative research, basically carried out among the residents of old age homes working in Public and Private sector in district Lahore. The total selected sample was 60 comprised on inmates of both gender equally selected from public and private old age homes residing in district Lahore. The data were collected as part of a larger qualitative study of how and what are the basic consequences which turns the older citizens towards the shelter homes. The research

fieldwork was conducted by the M. Phil. Research scholars in the Lahore district. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a purposively selected sample of men and women who are residing in shelter homes at district Lahore. The themes of the interviews were designed to reflect a number of theoretical issues as well as social issues that had arisen in their lives while residing at home with their families. All interviewees agreed to be interviewed on condition that they would remain anonymous, and we have used pseudonyms. The highly structured and differentiated nature of the sample means that we have been able to identify patterns and themes covered by the all thematic areas involved in the study. We have carried out a thematic analysis of the data, identifying the issues that emerged from the interviewees' responses to our questions.

FGD being a rapid assessment, semi-structured data gathering method in which a purposively selected set of participants gather to discuss issues and concerns based on a list of key themes drawn up by the researcher/facilitator (Kumar, 1987). Focus group discussion is successful when it is conducted in un-intimidating and permitting environment. The responses of the study were collected with the collaboration of Affiat; a shelter Home working under the umbrella of Social Welfare & Bait ul Mall Department, Government of the Punjab. All the discussions were conducted in Punjabi and noted by self because the respondents were not comfortable with tape recorder. In this study 60 inmates were selected equally, 30 from Affait being a solitary public institute while 30 inmates were selected from private old age homes by using the purposive sampling technique.

Findings and Discussion

Below mentioned are some core finding of this exploratory study, each finding is further discussed in detail

Family Patterns

Pakistan being a patriarchal society, male "superiority" and dominance over females and the subordination and submissiveness of females are commonly practiced social norms. Male supremacy can be observed in all fragments of society including urban, rural, erudite and uncultured families though with insignificant disparities. Extremely strict observance of dress code, forcedly marriages, submissive attitudes and behavior, limitations in social participation like education, professions, and business spheres is the manifestation of male dominancy in the society. Power in the family is generally centralized irrespective of joint family or otherwise. The head of the family is considered to have the "right" to make all decisions, even in personal matters. Marriages

are generally arranged by parents without the consent of the couples especially in the case of girl it is undoubtedly insignificant. This coerced arrangement has its manifestations in the form of family breakup, divorce, suicide and even murder.

The social consequence of this practice is the very common personal and social trait of submissiveness, which lasts from family life, through to other institutions like education, and organizations. The source of this centrality is "considered" to be rooted in Islam that stresses extreme respect for elders, especially parents. Unfortunately, this cultural value is grossly abused in practice. Islam does not give any authority to any role in society, without due responsibility and constraints. Man possesses those qualities which are required for the custodianship of family. However, it does not mean that man is superior to woman in all walks of life. There are certain areas where women are ahead of men. For example, man cannot take care of the children as can a woman. There is an inherent difference between man and woman. Man has an edge over woman in some physical aspects. Any step in the direction of equating both has proved futile. Some fields, they have to lose many feminine traits of their personality. They have to lose their own female identity and finally absorbed in the man folk. Any move towards the equality of man and woman may culminate in a permanent clash between both. There is a vast field available to compete with each other. This field is not in the material world but it is the field of morality. In this field, a woman can take the place of a man many times if she wishes. She can glorify herself more than a man through her noble deeds. The Qur'an states, and in no wise covet those things in which Allah hath bestowed his gifts more freely on some of you than on others: to men is allotted what they earn and to women what they earn: but ask Allah of His bounty: for Allah hath full knowledge of all things".

Social Attitudes mainly focused on social acquaintances, participation in family related affairs

When, we talk to the inmates of old age homes, everyone's story depicting similar anarchy in the family, abhorrence against the old ones and finally the removal of the elders from the family. It is the breakup of the system of the joint family and the introduction of a nuclear family that has brought this devastating situation in our society. Besides this, since the women have started working out of homes, there's no one to look after the routine needs of the elders at home. Also with the women working, come their attitudes towards the elders. This attitude of the women has also largely contributed to the removal of elders from families. The entire spectrum of circumstances has led to this unhappy need for old age homes. As reported by all the inmates

who are there, not for the love of being away from home and independent but because there is no better alternative left for them, once they are neglected and unwanted in their homes by their own children. The only consolation is that, they are getting their daily requirements of shelter and food although missing the pledges of love from the family.

It is the family atmosphere, being among their flesh and blood that most of the old people miss at the old age home. They do get their daily needs fulfilled but from where will the love of the dear ones come. A person needs love and support all his life no matter how independent or successful he is. Old age especially demands affection and love. When a person grows old, he inevitably needs someone to be with him. Elders will feel good and accepted if their own children look after them when they are in most need of someone. Children are brought up by their parents since they are born. Especially in a patriarchal and culturally bound society, parents are always ready for all the sacrifices they can make if demanded by life for the upbringing of their children. Familiarity to cultural practices and norms and values is certainly the foremost attribute that young people can gain from their parents and grandparents. They can definitely learn many good things from their parent's and grandparents' by living with them.

Economic Profile of the Senior Citizens

Economic dependency equally effect men and women in old age, as men are also dependent due to lack of physical power to earn livelihood. Women are already confined to household chores thus they are less affected as they are remaining busy in household domesticity. Due to transition in earning power, men face drastic changes in their behavior and attitude as they perceived deprived and dependent on others family members economically. Lack of earning capacity and dependability on others change the men attitude to coop-up the effects of shabby period of life. Woman is exempted from all economic struggles. Instead, she is expected to be obedient to her husband, the way citizens obey state authority. She is also required to be guardian of the private life of her husband. It is wife who knows all weakness and frailty of man and husband became vulnerable if his wife did not take care of him.

Big majorities of the older people (73.3 %) were unemployed people in the current period of time of life before to join the shelter homes and they depended on their descendants to maintain them economically, which was insufficient to meet their need that is creating a socioeconomic inconvenience in their lives. It indicates that kinfolks did not provide any financial help and pension amount was the only economic resource they relied on. They did not develop relations with their close relatives for critical economic position and neglecting part of families.

The left over role of kinsfolk members could be associated with the urban surroundings where individualism supersedes traditional values such as obedience for seniors and social proximity with them as a contrivance of psychological support in the crucial stage of age that is the cup-tie with the views of Cowgill (1972) who had holds the processes of industrialization and aftermath urbanization as responsible factors for generation of various sort of problems for aged people. Demographic aging is now a clear tendency in the development mankind, and we have noted some of its features. While the majority of older people live in developing countries like Asia and Latin America the ageing universe is projected to reach nearly 800 million in the next 25 years (US Bureau of the Census, 1999) for the study of the incidence of poverty, and especially chronic poverty, in old age, certain issues need to be borne in mind. Firstly, demographic statistics at a national level may mask variations within countries. For example, ageing may take place more rapidly in areas of relative affluence, where two of the three characteristics of the demographic transition, reduced fertility and mortality, may be increasing longevity. Thus Buenos Aires in 1991 had nearly twice the national level of people over 65 (16.3%:8.9%) (Lloyd-Sherlock, P., 2000).

Health related Issues

Memory status and physical condition of the old persons depicts that 58.33% had normal memory to interact with people, 30% had minor mental weakness and 11.66% had much mental weakness. Their memory state was checked in discussion through putting some tedious questions time and again in order to gauge the nature of replies reflecting similarity or contradiction. The study also reveals that 41.66% respondents appeared in normal physical condition, 30% looked physically weak and 28.33% had relatively bad health condition.

Increasing life expectancy raises the question of whether longer life spans result in more years of life in good health, or whether it is associated with increased morbidity and more years spent in prolonged disability and dependency. The major causes of disability and health problems in old age are non-communicable diseases including severe joint pain, memory loss, urinary incontinence, depression and falls or immobility, as well as some communicable diseases and injuries. As population age, health expenditures tend to grow rapidly since older persons usually require more health care in general and more specialized services to deal with their more complex pathologies. The number of deaths also increases sharply due to the exponential increase in mortality with age. Furthermore, older women generally

experience higher rates of morbidity and disability than older men, in large part because of their longer life expectancy (WHO, 2007).

Loneliness and Social Isolation

The data revels that the elderly people (75%) had no active role in family-related decisions. Although it is a general perception in patriarchal society that old people are very much experienced and their participation in decision-making ensures its positive feedback but in sampled area the situation presents a reverse picture. The reason is that in rural area patriarchy
has strong cultural clutches ensuring headship of aged people till their death but in urban society women have a considerable authoritative role which has reduced the importance of old age people, one of the reason is that women are economically independent being in a working status. It was also observed that majority of sampled respondents (51.7 %) had no opportunity of social contacts with neighbourers / friends / relatives. The family members did not fulfill their responsibility to give proper time to their senior age members themselves and neither paid attention to their hitches including no arrangement of meetings on regular basis with their friends, colleagues and other sort of associates. They mostly felt alone and even a liability on family that generates various kinds of negative thinking. Ayranci and Ozdag (2005) have viewed helplessness as an outcome of such situation whereas Emile Durkheim, in his theory on suicide, sees loss of social integration which can appear in the form of an extreme action.

Although there is no universal definition of loneliness, it is perhaps best described by Victor et al as being the 'deprivation of social contact, the lack of people available or willing to share social and emotional experiences, a state where an individual has the potential to interact with others but is not doing so and a discrepancy between the actual and desired interaction with (Victor, Scambler, Bond & Bowling, 2005).We know that loneliness and social isolation can affect everyone but older people are particularly vulnerable after the loss of friends and family, reduced mobility or limited income. The study highlight the phenomenon of loneliness among older people and its associated health risks, such as the link between declining mental health and physical health problems that compromise their quality of life. For many, feeling lonely in old age is the biggest problem. Loneliness has a much wider public health impact too, as it is associated with a number of negative health outcomes including mortality, depression and suicide as well as health service use (Vicotor, Scambler, Marston et al, 2006).

72 percent of older people questioned in the survey say that they feel lonely at times because their dearest child are living at the great distance away from them. As we get older, we naturally experience more age related losses. Many people experience loneliness either as a result of living alone, a lack of close family ties, for example. These losses are compounded by physical disablement and frail health and can result in feelings of loneliness, isolation and demoralization (Singh and Mishra, 2009). Those in the oldest age cohort are most likely to report the highest rates of loneliness, reflecting their increased probability of such losses. Although living alone is not necessarily synonymous with loneliness, we find that of those who admit to feelings of loneliness, the majority live alone. Previous research validates this as it indicates that living together with someone has a less negative influence on feelings of loneliness. This is a very clear finding that older people living along are at greater risk of social isolation. These same respondents are also in contact with their children, face-to-face or by other means, less often.

We are concerned that children are too busy to see their parents and the results of our survey highlight the pressures which families face in trying to juggle work and family commitments. In particular, our findings reveal that it is those most vulnerable who are affected by infrequent visits, the 'oldest' old, over 85 years and those living alone. We are also concerned that geographic mobility has increased the physical distance between generations as we know that some types of support may be provided regularly if those involved live relatively close to each other. These include, for example, support by adult children for infirm elderly parents with personal care and domestic tasks such as cooking and housework. As the lack of availability of family help with these types of tasks will influence demand for formally provided services, the proximity of adult children and their parents is of immediate policy significance.

However we can see that living alone, a lack of close family ties, and infrequent contact with children greatly contributes to a sense of isolation and loneliness. We know that loneliness is a serious health issue for older people and us all; it is associated with poor mental and physical health. It is good to see that the Government and local authorities have made a commitment for loneliness to be mapped in each area. We also know that higher levels of social contact and interaction with friends and family can improve well-being and a major predictor of quality of life is good social relationships. We believe that the key to prevention of loneliness in older people is through access to company, reciprocal emotional support, having someone to talk to.

A dichotomy characterizes our attitude towards the elderly. On the one hand, due in part to industrialization and the breakup of the extended family, the family is no longer willing to assume sole responsibility for the care of the elderly. On the other hand, however, it realizes that family belongingness is being replaced by

community belongingness, the motivation for this uncertainty almost from a "guilt" feeling that, in lieu of the family, societal action must be initiated to help the older generation.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It is concluded on the basis of qualitative data that the elderly people in the target area had various socio-economic problems including no participation in all kinds of family related affairs, no opportunity of entertainment or outing/excursion, no relations with relatives and neighbourers to interact with them, culturally and geographically strange urban environment, and inability to play a strong economic role in families affairs and accomplishment of their economic desires. The study recommends introducing old age allowances for the aged above 60 years, facilitating them with Internet particularly in the socially alien urban environment, establishing Care Homes at division and district level on need based approach. Media also have to play its vital role through various programmes/ features in highlighting the old age people's problems developing over time. Older people make huge efforts to ensure opportunities for other family members to find employment, to assist in the bringing up and education of grandchildren, to act as mentors and counselors within communities, and protect the security of the home while others are at work. There is also a dire need to sensitize the public and to create awareness through media about the rudimentary importance of the family institution especially to female to look after their older inmates in later age.

References

1. Susan N. Hillier, George M. Barrow, *Aging, the individual and the society* (9th Edition)
2. Scheibe, S. Freund, A.M. & Baltes, P.B (2007). Towards a development Psychology of sebnucbt (Life longings): The optimal (Utopian) life. *Developmental Psychology*,43 (3), 778-795
3. Scheibe, S., Kunzmann, U., & Baltes, P.B. (2008). Now territories of positive lifespan development: wisdom and life longings. In C.R Synyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds), *Hand book of positive psychology*: New York: Oxford University press.
4. United Nation, Department of Economic and Social Affairs: population Division (World *Population ageing* 2013).
5. Aruna Dubey, Seema Bahsin, Neelima Gupta, Neeraj Sharma (2011), *A study of elderly living in old age home and within family setup in Jammu*.
6. Montross L, Depp C, Daly J, Golshan S, Moore D 2006. Correlates of self-rated successful ageing among community dwelling other adults. *The American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, 14 (1): 43 – 51.
7. M. Shoaib, Sarfraz Khan, Mohsin Hassan Khan (2011), Family support and health status of elderly people (A case study of District Gujrat, Pakistan), *Middle east Journal of Scientific* 519: 525.
8. Hamid Alam, Farman Ali, Umar Daraz (2013) Socio-Economic problems of persons with old age in District Dir lower Khyber Pakhtunkhwan Pakistan, *Social science and Humanities* vol 4. No 1.
9. Furdose Gulzar, M. Iqbal Zafar, Asghar Ahmed (2008), Socio-Economic problems of seniors citizen and their adjustment in Punjab, *Pakistan journal of Agriculture science* Vol. 45, No 1.