

LIVING ARRANGEMENT OF ELDERLY IN INDIAN SOCIETY FROM A SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT:-

Population ageing is a global issue, which has been recognized to have implications on social welfare systems. Rapid Socio economic changes are changing the nature of caring in India, Where family ties have always dictated elder care. This study looks how the family's role in caring the elderly has changed in India or still Indian traditional family structure has strong ties in caring the elderly. The value based Indian family system has been a core institution providing care and support for their older members.

Keywords:- Rapid, Dictated, Elderly, Traditional, Structure.

The number of aged people worldwide is rising in both industrialized and developing countries the United Nations predicts that one in six individuals will be 65 or older by 2050. Developing countries like India are also experiencing this demographic shift which is being fueled by increased life expectancy and falling birth rates. India like many other developing countries in the world is presently witnessing rapid ageing of its population. According to world population prospects UN revision, 2006, the population of aged in India is currently the second largest in the world (Shakuntala; 2013).

There is no single widely accepted definition of the aged different societies differ on the definition. In developed countries may be due to higher expectation of life and better nutritional status ensuring better health, physical and mental auditions, persons are considered aged at the chronological age of 65 years and above. In India this age is 58 years for most of the central government employees (Kohli 1996).

From a sociological perspective, living arrangements are defined not just as physical housing, but as reflections of societal power dynamics, economic structures and cultural norms. It views the traditional nuclear family as the most effective arrangement. The division of labor within the household ensured society functions efficiently.

With the rapidly increasing number of aged compounded by disintegration of joint families and ever increasing influence of modernization and new life styles, the care of elderly has emerged as an important issue in India. Providing care for the aged has never been a problem in India where a value based joint family system was dominant.

The family structure and living arrangement of an individual changes in the family life cycle. Living arrangement can be explained in terms of the household in which the elderly live, the authority they enjoy, the place they stay in and the people they stay with, the kind of relationships they maintain with their kith and kin and on the whole, the extent to which they adjust to the changing environment (Irudaya, Rajan et al 1999). The family life cycle is defined as the time period extending from the time of marriage to the death of surviving spouse. A conceptual model of family life cycle constitutes four phases, formation, extension, contraction, and dissolution (Gulati, Leela 1992). The stage of family life cycle at a point of time influences the roles and needs of the members. In the old age an individual needs both support and care. The 'support' and 'taking care' are two different concepts. Support of elderly refers to financial help where taking care means extending emotional support

(Gulati 2006). This type of assistance is possible only through family member or with whom to elderly live.

Family is the most important and universal of all forms of associations. It is only the family in which all the members if willing and sincere cooperate with each other. Gilbert (1952) holds the view that marriage and family relating proper care are one of the most important factors influencing the emotional security of the elderly.

The traditional Indian family structure used to provide the required environment for the comfortable living of the elderly. The extended family usually consisted of three generation living together where in the elderly used to have a high status in the household but, with a rising number of nuclear families, the elderly seems to have been deprived of certain needs (Rajan, Mishra, Sarma 1999).

Various studies dealing with the problem of living arrangement of elderly point towards the decline in status of the elderly in the changing Indian family structure but not so in their western counterparts. Mahajan (1980) in her study of 749 destitute elderly persons selected from all the districts of Haryana state evaluates internal network of family relationship of the aged. The study reveals that only 219 old persons are being provided with some support and majority of them i.e. 530 are abandoned by kinsmen. The finding of their study are totally contrary to the existing belief that old person are looked after by their kinsmen in India.

Shah (1993) conducted a study on intra family relations of urban elderly and finds that there are somewhat better intra family relations among widows than the widowers and somewhat lower among those living in joint families compared to those living in nuclear families further, elderly having no substantial assists, or a fairly good source of income and who are economically dependent find the attitude and behavior of their family members are unsatisfactory.

Are (1994) studied the family life of the aged among slum dwellers Kulkarni Hakkal Slum in Hubli city of Karnataka. She found that the family life in a slum is controlled by culture. Poverty and illiteracy are no obstacles in the practice of cultural norms. Cordial relationship exists between the elderly and their family members.

Jayashree (2000) conducted a study in Mangalore urban area in south Canara district of Karnataka state. The study deals with the living arrangement of the retired people. Finding showed that a large proportion live with their kinmemebers and very few of the retired live alone.

Rajan Kumar (2003) present a broader understanding of the living arrangements among the elderly bared on observations from the National family Health survey and reinforces the univertional notion that the family is still taking care of the elderly in a big way.

As in many countries, the family is cherished institution in India and often provides important non formal social security for the older population (Bloom, 2010). Most older men and women in India live with their families, and it is the most preferred living arrangement of older people (Gupta 2009)

Over the years, India has been experiencing considerable change in its social structure and institution as a result of modernization, industrialization, urbanization and the rising sort of living. One of the significant changes over the past few years is the weakening of the family institution, which has played a significant role in the care of older adults. But still family has been the core providing care and support (Kumari ,2019) But still, family has been the core

providing care and support (Kumari, 2019). The religious and social cultural milieu also preaches that it is the moral duty of adult children to provide care for their older ones.

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