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P Hema Latha
Research Scholar, Department
of Sociology and Social Work,
Acharya Nagarjuna,
University, Guntur, Andhra
Pradesh, India

Dr. V Venkateswarlu
Professor, Department of
Sociology and Social Work,
Acharya Nagarjuna
University, Guntur, Andhra
Pradesh, India

Corresponding Author:
Dr. V Venkateswarlu
Professor, Department of
Sociology and Social Work,
Acharya Nagarjuna
University, Guntur, Andhra
Pradesh, India

An exploratory study on free and paid senior citizen homes in Andhra Pradesh

P Hema Latha and Dr. V Venkateswarlu

Abstract

The major objective of this paper was to know the reasons of elderly to stay in senior citizen homes both paid and free homes. And to identify their preference stay and aspirations etc. The study was conducted in six senior citizen homes which were located in different areas of Guntur District. In these six, three were paid homes and another three were free homes. The data was collected through case study and interview methods. The findings reveal that differences and adjustment problem with Daughter-in-law/son, Negligence of family members and poverty, insufficient housing and economic hardships were some of the reasons for joining in the homes as expressed by the elderly. Financial autonomy and living with children were the major aspiration of elderly living in paid homes and free homes along with other aspirations.

Keywords: Elderly, living arrangement, free homes, paid homes

Introductions

Ageing is one of the emerging problems of the world and it is applicable to India also. In the present era, rapid change is observed everywhere. The biggest challenge of any nation is to provide essential support services for the growing graying population. With advancement in medical technology and improved standard of living automatically the lifespan of individuals is increased. The trend is bound to increase further in the future years. As per World Population Prospects: the 2019 Revision_report the number of persons aged 80 years or above is projected three times, from 143 million in 2019 to 426 million in 2050. According to United Nations projections, by the year 2020, the number of older persons is expected to increase more than threefold, from 600 million to almost 2 billion. During the last two decades both the developed and developing countries are facing the challenges in preparing policies due to the phenomena of population ageing. Even though the challenge is same, its implications vary in developed, developing and under developed countries. In the traditional Indian society the old age was not at all a problem. Younger ones used to give more respect to the elderly. Elderly were the chief patrons of the family. The stable joint family system provides security and care and use to protect the elderly from all angles. This family structure has been the socioeconomic backbone of the average Indian (Shah, 1998) ^[14]. In India a large percentage of the aged are poor and destitute and bereft of even the basic necessities of life, namely food, shelter, clothing. Due to limited resources, the government is also unable to fulfill the basic needs of the aged population. How the social systems respond to the consequences of ageing and face the challenges is crucial for any nation in creating ageing friendly society. It is very important to understand how these changes happen and how they mix up with traditional and cultural issues to face the challenges of elderly.

Living arrangements is one of the component which influences overall wellbeing of the elderly. When there is no well-developed system in the country to provide needy social services to the elderly they must opt whatever is available for them in their close proximity, for social, Physical and psychological support including economic (Domingo and Caster line, 1992) ^[2]. Policy makers and government officials along with NGOs should take initiative to support and care of elderly. The government should give financial security to the vulnerable sections of elderly population in possible ways like health care, transport, recreation, etc.

Ageing is a serious reality and last step of life cycle which cannot be avoided by none. Most of the elderly prefer to live with their children. Usually elderly men who have their wives

will depend on them but older women likely to rely on children and others. Many elderly suffer due to inadequate income to meet their basic needs. Nowadays, Nuclear families are seen more in urban areas than in rural areas thereby affecting the care of elderly. Dual career of women, increased self-centeredness, contemporary changes in the family system are forcing elderly to live alone or to join in old age homes. The long term caring of the aged in terms of community based services is a matter of great concern. Health and wellbeing of elderly are affected by many interwoven aspects like physical, emotional and social environment.

Review of Literature

Previous research results of studies conducted with institutionalized elderly are presented in brief. Minal P and Kamala R (1995) [9] conducted a study and found that the institutionalized elderly are having poor adjustments than the elderly living in the families. Kanwar P and Chadha N.K (1998) [6] assessed the psycho-social determinants of 60 institutionalized and 60 non institutionalized elderly. The results revealed that institutionalized elderly are more depressed and lonely. More or less same results were observed in Agarwal S and Srivastava S. K (2002) [5] where they found that elderly living in institutions are more depressed and suffer due to anxiety: Naik A (2007) [10] study also supports this. Mathew M A. *et al.*, (2009) [7] did a comparative study on stress, coping strategies and quality of life of institutionalized and non-institutionalized elderly in Kottayam district, Kerala, India with a sample of 150 (75+75) and found that there is significant difference between these two groups which was consistent with the previous studies stating that institutionalized are more depressed. Kavitha A. K. (2007) [15]’s results also reports that elderly living in senior citizen homes showed less mean scores regarding quality of life. Neelam, wason and Karuna Jain (2011) [13] studied Nutritional Status, dietary adequacy and health problems of 56 institutionalized elderly in Jodhpur (31 males and 25 females). Questionnaire, interview, anthropometry, dietary surveys were used to collect the data. Results revealed that elderly living in care homes had better nutritional status and care. All the personal needs and health care are being met by the homes and the nutritional condition of the elderly seems to be satisfactory. Mehta (1999) [8] found low protein,

low calories, and low nutrient intake in institutionalized elderly as compared to elderly living in families. Saletti *et al.*, (2000) [12], Hewitt *et al.*, (2006) [5] reported that nearly one fourth of the elderly are either malnourished or overweight in free old age homes.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the present study are:

- To know the socio-demographic profile of the elderly living in senior citizen homes.
- To find out the reasons of elderly for staying in free and paid senior citizen homes.
- To explore the aspirations of elderly living in free and paid senior citizen homes

Methodology

For the present study, Six senior citizen homes were selected which were located in different areas of Guntur District. In these six, three were paid homes and another three were free homes. Convenience sampling method was adopted and the data was collected by making use of both qualitative and quantitative techniques i.e., case study method and interviews.

Results and Discussion

Socio- Demographic profiles of the elderly

Table 1: Distribution of the sample respondents by Age

Age	Paid Homes		Free Homes		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
60-69	19	48.72	21	67.74	40	57.14
70-79	15	38.46	07	22.58	22	31.42
80+	05	12.82	03	09.68	08	11.42
Total	39	100.00	31	100.00	70	100.00

The above table shows that majority (57.14%) of the respondents are in 60-69 age group, followed by 31.42% in 70-79 age group and very few were (11.42%) in 80+ age group. In the paid homes and free homes also the same trend was noticed where in paid homes 48.72% belongs to 60-69 age group, 38.46% in 70-79 age group followed by 12.82% in 80+ group. In free homes majority (67.74%) were in 60-69 age group, 22.58% in 70-79 age group followed by 9.68% in 80+ group.

Table 2: Distribution of the sample respondents by Sex

Sex	Paid Homes		Free Homes		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	18	46.15	12	38.71	30	42.86
Female	21	53.85	19	61.29	40	57.14
Total	39	100.00	31	100.00	70	100.00

The above table shows that majority (57.14%) of the respondents were females and males were only 42.86%. In both the categories of elderly living in paid homes and free homes, female crossed the number of males such as 53.85%

and 61.29% respectively and the correspondent males were 46.15% and 38.71% in paid and free home category respectively.

Table 3: Distribution of the sample respondents by religion

Religion	Paid Homes		Free Homes		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Hindu	23	58.98	12	38.70	35	50.00
Christian	11	28.20	13	41.94	24	34.28
Muslim	05	12.82	06	19.36	11	15.72
Total	39	100.00	31	100.00	70	100.00

From the above table it was observed that majority (50.00%) of the respondents were Hindus followed by Christians 34.28% and Muslim 15.72%. Same trend was seen in the Elderly living in Paid homes where 58.98%

belong to Hindu Religion followed by 28.20% in Christian Religion and 12.82% in Muslim Religion. But in the Free Homes category Christians were higher (41.94%) followed by Hindus 38.70% and Muslims 12.82%.

Table 4: Distribution of the sample respondents by caste

Caste	Paid Homes		Free Homes		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Non Schedule Caste	30	76.92	20	64.52	50	71.43
Schedule Caste	09	23.08	11	35.48	20	28.57
Total	39	100.00	31	100.00	70	100.00

The above table determines that majority (71.43%) of the respondents belong to Non Schedule Caste and 28.57% of the respondents belong to Schedule caste category. In paid homes 76.92% of the respondents belong to non-schedule caste and 23.08% belong to schedule caste. In free home

category 64.52% belong to Non schedule caste community and 35.48% belong to schedule caste category. On the whole nonscheduled caste elderly were more than schedule caste elderly.

Table 5: Distribution of the sample respondents by background area of living

Background Area of Living	Paid Homes		Free Homes		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Rural	16	41.02	18	58.06	34	48.57
Urban	23	58.97	13	41.94	36	51.43
Total	39	100.00	31	100.00	70	100.00

From the above table it was observed that majority (51.43%) of the respondents belong to urban area and (48.57%) belong to rural area. In paid home category urban background elderly were more (58.97%) than rural

background (41.02%). In free homes this is in reverse where rural background elderly (58.06%) were more than urban background elderly (41.94%).

Table 6: Distribution of the sample respondents by educational qualification

Educational Qualification	Paid Homes		Free Homes		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Illiterate	09	23.07	22	70.96	31	44.28
Primary	17	43.60	09	29.03	26	37.14
High School	05	12.82	00	0.00	05	7.14
Intermediate	08	20.51	00	0.00	08	11.42
Graduate & above	00	0.00	00	0.00	00	0.00
Total	39	100.00	31	100.00	70	100.00

The above table depicts the educational qualification of the respondents. 44.28% were illiterates, 37.14% of elderly completed their Primary school 11.42% intermediate

followed by 7.14% high school. None of the respondents have educational qualification of graduation and above.

Table 7: Distribution of the sample respondents by marital status

Marital Status	Paid Homes		Free Homes		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Unmarried	02	05.13	04	12.90	06	8.57
Married & living with spouse	19	48.72	12	38.71	31	44.29
Widow/Widower	18	46.15	15	48.39	33	47.14
Total	39	100.00	31	100.00	70	100.00

The above table depicts that majority (47.14%) of the respondents were widow/widowers. 44.29% of the respondents were married and living with spouse. Only 8.57% of the respondents were unmarried. In paid home category 48.72% of the respondents were married and living

with spouse, 46.15% of the respondents were widow/widower and only 5.13% were unmarried. In free home category majority (48.39%) of the respondents were widow/widowers. 38.71% of the respondents were married and living with spouse and 12.90% were unmarried.

Table 8: Distribution of the sample respondents by No. of married children

No. of married children	Paid Homes		Free Homes		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
None	2	5.12	4	12.90	6	8.57
One	6	15.38	2	6.45	8	11.42
Two	16	41.02	6	19.35	22	31.42

Three	11	28.20	8	25.80	19	27.14
More than Three	4	10.25	11	35.48	15	21.42
Total	39	100.00	31	100.00	70	100.00

The above table clearly indicates that majority (31.42%) of the respondents have two married children, 27.14% of the respondents have three married children, 21.42% of the respondents have more than three married children, 11.42% of the respondents have one married child and only 8.57% of the respondents have no married children. In the paid home category, 41.02% of the respondents have two married children and in free homes 19.35% of the respondents have two married children, 28.20% of the respondents have three married children and in free homes

35.48% of the respondents have more than three married children, 15.38% of the respondents have one married child and in free homes only 6.45% of the respondents have one married child, 10.25% of the respondents have more than three married children and in free homes 35.48% of the respondents have more than three married children, and in paid category only 5.12% of the respondents have no married children, in free homes 12.90% of the respondents do not have married children.

Table 9: Distribution of the elderly by reasons for joining in paid homes

S. No	Reason (Paid Homes)	No.	%
1.	Daughter-in-law problem	18	46.15
2.	Misbehavior of son	07	17.94
3.	Adjustment problem	02	5.12
4.	Disrespect and neglect by the family members	04	10.25
5.	Unwillingness expressed to take care	03	7.69
6.	Free and independent life	01	2.56
7.	Settlement of children at abroad	04	10.25

The above table reveals that the majority (46.15%) of the elderly respondents stated that Daughter-in-law problem was the reason for joining in paid homes and 17.94% of the elderly respondents stated that misbehavior of son was the reason for joining in paid home. 10.25% of the respondents stated that disrespect and neglect by the family members was the reason for joining in paid home and 7.69% of the respondents stated that unwillingness expressed to take care

was the reason for joining in paid home. 10.25% of the respondents stated that settlement of children at abroad was the reason for joining in paid home and 5.12% of the respondents stated that adjustment problem was the reason for joining in paid home only 2.56% of the respondents stated that free and independent life was the reason for joining in paid home.

Table 10: Distribution of the elderly by reasons for joining in free homes

S. No	Reason (Free homes)	No.	%
1.	Shortage of accommodation	02	6.45
2.	In-law problems	03	9.67
3.	Negligence of son/daughter-in-law	17	54.83
4.	Unwillingness expressed to take care	03	7.69
5.	Afraid of children	01	3.22
6.	Abuse by care givers	01	3.22
7.	Poverty	04	12.90

The above table determines that majority (54.83%) of the respondents stated that negligence of son/daughter-in-law was the reason for joining in free home, 12.90% of the respondents stated that poverty was the reason for joining in free homes, 9.67% of the respondents stated that in-law problems was the reason for joining in free homes and 7.69% of the respondents stated that unwillingness

expressed to take care was the reason for joining in free homes. 3.22% of the respondents stated that afraid of children was the reason for joining in free homes, 6.45% of the respondents stated that shortage of accommodation was the reason for joining in free homes and only 3.22% of the respondents stated that abuse by care givers was the reason for joining in free homes.

Table 11: Distribution of the sample respondents by aspirations

Aspirations	Paid Homes (39)				Free Homes (31)				Total (70)			
	Yes	%	No	%	Yes	%	No	%	Yes	%	No	%
Want to be with children	31	79.48	8	20.51	29	93.54	2	6.45	60	85.71	10	14.71
Attending gatherings	20	51.28	19	48.71	16	51.61	15	48.38	36	51.42	34	48.57
To spend time with relatives	25	64.10	14	35.89	18	58.06	13	41.93	43	61.42	27	38.57
Spend time with grand children	30	76.92	9	23.07	25	80.64	6	19.35	55	78.57	15	21.42
Financial Autonomy	32	82.05	7	17.94	26	83.87	5	16.12	58	82.85	12	17.14
Free transport	20	51.28	19	48.71	31	100	0	00	51	72.85	19	27.14
Free Medical Aid	39	100	0	00	31	100	0	00	70	100	00	00
Enough food	35	89.74	4	10.25	26	83.87	5	16.12	61	87.14	09	12.85
Soft corner from the staff	30	76.92	9	23.07	27	87.09	4	12.90	57	81.42	13	17.57

The above table depicts that 87.14% of the elderly respondents felt that they need enough food to eat, 85.71% desired to live with their children, 82.85% are in need of financial autonomy to fulfil their needs without depending on others, 81.42% expressed that they feel happy if the staff who are working in the senior citizen homes behaves softly with them, 78.57% are fond of their grandchildren and want to spend some time with them, 72.85% expressed that government should give them free transport to go wherever they want to meet people, 61.42% desire to spend time with their relatives 51.42% like to attend gatherings like previous life but 100% of the elderly expressed that the government should provide free medical aid for all the elderly irrespective of age groups and living arrangement.

Irrespective of the type of home whether paid or free majority of the elderly expressed that they want to be with children (79.48% paid homes) (93.54% free homes). There is no much difference in paid and free homes regarding the desire to attend gatherings (51.28% and 51.61%), majority are in need of financial autonomy (82.05% paid homes and 83.87% free homes), regarding spending time with grandchildren (76.92% & 80.64%), enough food (89.74% & 83.87%) there is no much difference between categories of homes. 51.28% of elderly living in paid homes felt that it would be better if elderly are given free transport facility where as 100% of the elderly living in free homes desired the same. Unanimously all the elderly expressed that they need free medical aid irrespective of type of home. 76.92% of the elderly living in paid homes and 87.09% of the elderly living in free homes expressed that the behaviour of the staff should not be harsh towards them which is hurting them and causing panic towards their status.

Conclusion

The findings of the present study states that majority of the elderly living in senior citizen homes were from urban background. But in elderly living in free homes the situation is just opposite. Majority were from rural area. Gender wise females crossed the males on the whole as well as in paid homes and free homes. Differences and adjustment problem with Daughter-in-law/son, Negligence of family members and poverty, insufficient housing and economic hardships were some of the reasons for joining in the homes as expressed by the elderly. Loneliness is another reason of joining the homes and is supported by Dubey *et al.*, (2011)^[3] and Gupta *et al.*, (2014)^[4]. Adjustment problem with daughter-in-law/son was expressed by the elderly as the major reason to join in the homes. This is inconsistent with the results of Siddhu (2010)^[16]. The elderly who are residing in paid homes state that they joined in the home to lead a peaceful life with freedom and without interference of others. Panigrahi *et al.*, (2012)^[11] also revealed the same. 100% of the elderly expressed that the government should provide free medical aid for all the elderly irrespective of age groups and living arrangement. In spite of the differences and conflicts with children, majority of them want to live with their children and grandchildren.

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