



Socio-Economic Profile of the Elderly Who Live in Old Age Homes and Who Live within Families: A Study of Haryana

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Abstract

The study aimed to understand the needs and challenges of the elderly by examining their individual backgrounds. The study analysed the family history, caste, education, marital status, family type, annual income, age, gender, and religion of 404 elderly respondents living within families or in old age homes. The results showed that the majority of respondents belong to the Punjabi caste, with 27.48% of them being Punjabi. The majority of respondents are illiterate, with 33.42% being illiterate and only 2.97% having higher education. Nearly half of the respondents (49.76%) are widows or widowers and over half (53.96%) belong to joint families. The majority of the respondents have an annual income below 50,000 rupees, with 82.67% being in this category. The study also found that 31.69% of the respondents were in the 71 to 75 age group and 63.36% were male. The majority of respondents are Hindu, with 89.11% being Hindu. The findings provide insight into the diverse backgrounds of the elderly and the factors that shape their aging experiences. The study analysed the living conditions and property ownership of 404 elderly individuals. 31.19% of them own a house but have to abandon it due to family issues, while over a quarter own land and 19.31% have no form of property. The majority of the respondents (88.37%) do not have access to mobile phones for communication, and this trend is consistent among both the categories of respondents. Most respondents (72.03%) do not have a separate room for living due to lack of space in their residence and having 2 to 4 members in a single room. The main sources of entertainment for the surveyed respondents include "satsang" (37.63%), playing card games (28.71%), television watching and gossiping. In families, the majority enjoy playing card games, while in old age homes, "satsang" is the main source of entertainment.

Keywords: Old Age Home, Elderly People, Family, Religion, Income, Age & Sex,
Marital Status and Religion



Introduction

The natural progression of growing older affects all living things, known as aging. This process encompasses a multifaceted transformation in human existence. One's perception of aging is highly subjective and shaped by cultural norms and individual needs. Aging is a biological occurrence that largely cannot be controlled and has a profound impact on various aspects of human life. Studies on aging in humans often highlight demographic changes with an emphasis on the "age of the population," a trend that has been prevalent in industrialized societies for some time (United Nations, 2019). As the population of India continues to grow, the phenomenon of aging is becoming increasingly prevalent. India is currently the second most populous country in the world and with improved life expectancy, the number of older persons in India is also on the rise. Currently, there are over 100 million individuals over the age of 60 in India, and this number is expected to reach 323 million by 2050 (India Demographic Profile, 2013).

The United Nations World Assembly on Aging, held in Vienna in 1982, placed significant importance on research on the developmental and humanitarian aspects of aging. Special emphasis should be placed on comparative and cross-cultural studies in aging. In recent years, population aging has gained significant attention from policymakers in both developed and developing countries, but the issues arising from it will affect nations differently (Situation Analysis of the Elderly in India, 2011). Defining old age can be challenging as it is simply the opposite of youth. There is no specific point at which one becomes old. The term "ageing" or "senescence," which is sometimes used in scientific terms, implies decline and deterioration.

Bernard Strehler in 1962, put forward five principles for typical aging as, Accumulative: The impacts of aging grow over time; Widespread: All species members show signs of aging; Steady: Aging is a series of slow alterations; Inherent: Alterations would occur even in an ideal surroundings; and Detrimental: The alterations that occur hinder normal biological functions. Aging is a worldwide phenomenon that affects every individual (unlike disease) and is an organism-inherent, continual process of development. Elderly persons depend on others for their various needs, such as economic, emotional, and physical support, etc. (Bhushanam, Vani et al, 2013). Family plays an important role in caring for the elderly. In the past, joint families fulfilled all types of needs (food, clothing, and housing) of the elderly. However, now, with the busy work schedule of the younger generation, many elderly are not looked after properly. As a result, elderly people experience problems such as tension, frustration, depression, unnecessary fear, distress, and anxiety,



etc. (Patil, S.S. & S.K. Itagi, 2013). It is said that structural changes in the family have led to many elderly persons moving into old-age homes (Vanita, D., 2014). Without doubt, family is an ideal institution for caring for the elderly, but in reality, this perception has changed, and many older persons living with their married children are in more difficult conditions than their counterparts (Kumkum, P. and Kush Tulika, 2015).

It should be noted that Haryana is currently transitioning from an agricultural-based economy to an industrial-based economy. Keeping these changes in mind, the present study aims to know about “Socio-Economic Profile of the Elderly Who Live in Old Age Homes and Who Live within Families: A Study of Haryana”.

Review of Literatures

Das and Shah (2001) in their study had examined the health, social, and economic well-being of older adults in India. Due to limitations in census data, the researchers were unable to gather information on certain aspects of aging, such as health status, housing conditions, and familial support. The study recommended interventions to improve the quality of life for older adults, including providing appropriate institutional and economic support in light of the breakdown of traditional family structures.

Alam, M. (2006) had conducted a study on “Ageing in India: Socio-Economic and Health Dimensions”. In this study, both i.e. primary and secondary data were utilized. The findings revealed that the elderly in India often face social deprivation, poor living conditions, and physical fragility. The researcher recommended implementing public funds for their health and financial security through appropriate fiscal measures.

Lena, A., et al., (2009) in their research paper examined the social and health problems of elderly individuals. The study focused on the social and economic backgrounds and health problems faced by elderly persons. The study was conducted in Udupi Taluk of the Karnataka state and the respondents were elderly patients who attended clinics of the department of community medicine. A total of 213 elderly patients were studied using a structured interview schedule method. The researchers found that less than three-fourths (73%) of the total respondents belonged to the 60-69-year-old age group, and approximately half of the respondents were found to be illiterate. Additionally, less than half (48%) of the total respondents reported being unhappy in their lives. Regarding health problems, the study found that the majority of the total respondents suffered from



hypertension, and more than two-thirds (68%) of the total respondents reported feeling neglected by others. The researchers suggested that there is a need for counselling centres for elderly individuals to address their physical and psychological needs, as well as for social security schemes to cover a larger population of elderly individuals.

Agewell Foundation (2010) made a report on 'Isolation in Old Age-A National Study' for examining the income and expenditure patterns of elderly persons in India. A sample of 15,000 older people, half from rural areas and half from urban areas, were selected from various socio-economic backgrounds, such as retired individuals, non-pensioners, and businesspersons. The study found that 35% of the respondents had a monthly income of more than Rs. 10,000 and 11.23% had no regular monthly income. Additionally, the study revealed that the financial status of elderly women was particularly poor, as 2/3rd of rural elderly women in the sample population did not have a source of income. The majority of respondents, 90.16%, agreed that maintaining a healthy lifestyle in old age was a significant challenge, due to the high cost of medical services.

Dubey, Aruna et al. (2011) conducted a study on elderly living in old age homes and within family setups in Jammu, India. The study aimed to understand the background of elderly living in these settings and to compare the environments of elderly women residing in old age homes and within families. The study included 60 respondents, 30 of whom lived in a family setting and 30 of whom lived in an old age home. The researchers used a structured interview schedule and observation methods to gather data. The results of the study showed that elderly women living in families had a better position in terms of depression, loneliness, and level of satisfaction compared to those living in old age homes.

Panda, Bijayalaxmi (2013) conducted a study entitled "Socio-Economic Problems of Elderly Widows in Puri, Orissa." Data of 50 elderly widow women were collected with the help of simple random sampling, who were 60 years of age and above. Interview schedule and observation method were used for data collection. The study revealed that 48% of the respondents were facing financial problems and they were categorized as very poor (18%) and poor (30%). Out of 50 respondents, only 15 (30%) senior single women were receiving old age pension, but 70% were deprived of it.

Agewell Foundation (2016) conducted a study on "Financial Status of Older People in India – An Assessment" to analyse the varying socio-economic status of old age persons and to evaluate the impact of financial status on the healthcare of elderly persons in rural and urban areas. A total of 15,000 respondents were selected from rural and urban areas across the country. Out of the total



15,000 old age persons, 7411 respondents were older males while 7589 respondents were older females. The findings of the survey showed that most of the respondents (51.9%) were in the age-group of 60-70 years. Almost two-fifths (41.43%) of respondents' main source of income was their family income or pension, while a similar percentage (40.63%) of respondents said that their monthly income was only up to 5000 rupees. In addition, 40.33 percent of older women agreed that the main source of their income was pension. Two-thirds (65.7%) of respondents lived with their spouse, and only 18 percent of respondents reported living alone. More than half of the respondents reported being financially independent as they had multiple sources of income. Approximately one-tenth (9.31%) of respondents said that they were happy with their financial condition, while about two-fifths (42.41%), in which 49.32 percent of elderly from rural areas and 35.49 percent of elderly from urban areas, revealed that they were unhappy with their current financial situation. The overwhelming majority (95.69%) of elderly stated that they own their own house. The survey also found that most of the respondents (82.77%) reported that their main problems are related to healthcare and medical issues. On the other hand, over half (56.34%) of respondents claimed that their main problems are related to social issues. Furthermore, more than half of the respondents claimed that financial problems were major issues (51.8%). It was observed in the study that although some respondents had good financial status, it did not guarantee the best healthcare for older persons.

Agewell foundation (2018) conducted a study to understand the economic conditions of older people in India. The study was conducted by 400 volunteers across five regions in India, Northern, Western, Eastern, Southern and Central India. A total of 10000 elderly people were studied, of which 4899 were rural respondents and 5101 were urban respondents. The study found that the majority (96.5%) of respondents were in the 60-70 years' age group, and only 12.3% were in the oldest age group (81+ years). The study found that 30.1% of respondents stated that their primary source of income was a monthly pension, and 19.4% stated that their primary source of income was money earned from rent. The study also found that 85% of elderly people reported an increase in spending in the last decade, with 6.5% reporting a decrease in spending. The study also found that elderly men are facing more financial difficulties than women.

Methodology: -

In brief, methodology is a detailed blueprint for conducting research. The present study aims to



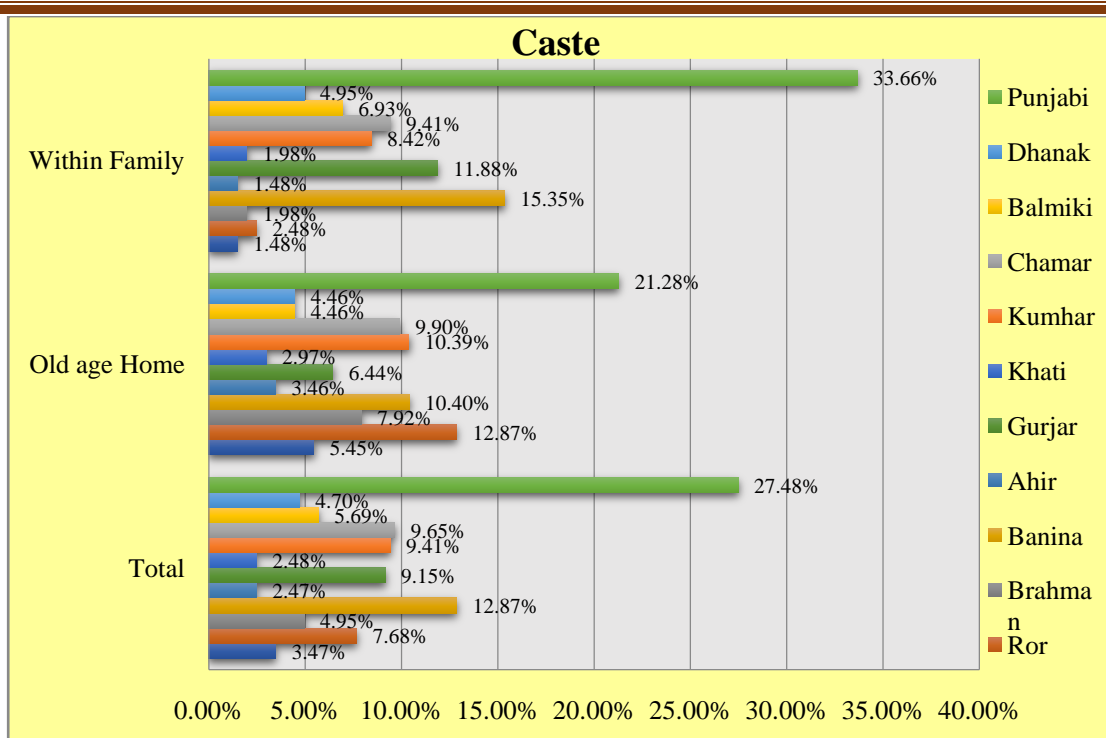
know the Socio-Economic Profile of the Elderly Who Live in Old Age Homes and Who Live within Families a Study of Haryana. It follows an exploratory-cum-descriptive research design, and information is collected through interview-schedule, observation methods and secondary sources. Old Age Homes in Haryana were selected based on their functionality, and seven districts (Karnal, Rohtak, Sonapat, Jind, Kaithal, Faridabad, and Rewari) were chosen as they were found to be more functional during a pilot study. These homes are monitored by NGOs and the government. Seven nearby villages (Lahli, Baldi, Garhibrahman, Akalgarh, Devigarh, Fatehpur, and Gokalgarh) were also selected randomly. A total of 404 elderly individuals (50% from Old Age Homes and 50% from nearby villages) were purposively selected from the universe of the study.

Socio-Economic Profile of Elderly

To grasp the issues and necessities of the elderly, it's crucial to be familiar with their individual backgrounds. Family history holds a crucial impact on one's life. Examining the family history of the elderly aids in comprehending their aging experiences. The elderly's background information offers insight into the diverse perspectives towards aging. Family life, socio-cultural status, and education are factors that contribute to the heterogeneity in the elderly's lives. Understanding these differences is crucial in catering to the elderly's needs and resources, as well as promoting growth and development through targeted policies, programs, and services. This section outlines the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the participants.

Caste

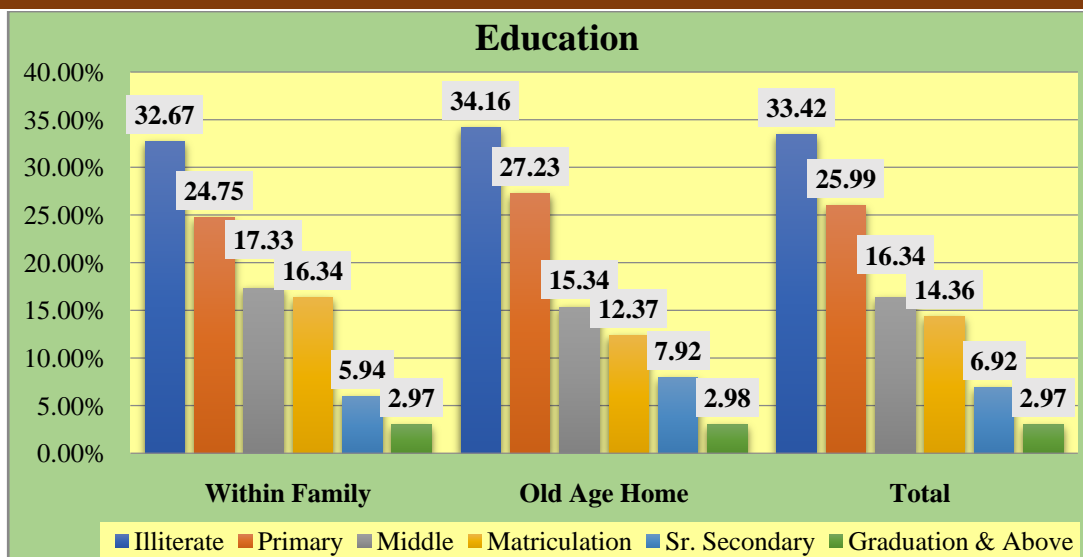
Caste is a hereditary social grouping defined by birth and is unalterable. It results in a hierarchical division of society with traditional occupations. Each caste has a set of prescribed rules of conduct for its members. Inter-caste social interaction is limited, including restrictions on food exchange and inter-caste marriage. The caste identity has become a controversial topic with political, social, and legal implications. The Varna system of ancient India has evolved into the Caste system in modern times.



The Bar Graph clarify the caste distribution of the 404 respondents, both within families and in old age homes. Around 27.48% of the total respondents belong to the Punjabi Caste, 12.87% to the Bania Caste, and 9.41% to the Kumhar Caste. Among the 202 respondents living with their families, 33.66% belong to the Punjabi Caste. Meanwhile, 21.28% of the 202 respondents residing in old age homes are from the Punjabi Caste.

Education

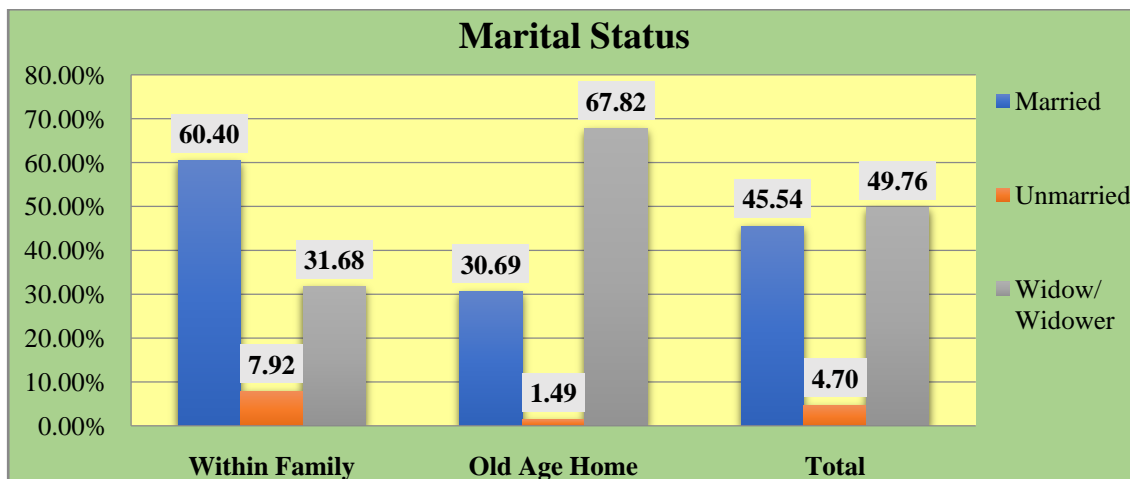
The social background of the elderly is crucial in comprehending their current circumstances. Education plays a significant role in shaping their lifetime adaptation patterns, impacting their lifestyle and living conditions in old age. This is due to their higher economic stability, better living conditions, increased awareness about health and sanitation, and access to resources.



The Bar Graph reveal that 33.42% of the 404 respondents are illiterate and 25% have only completed primary education. Only 2.97% have graduated or achieved higher education. The educational levels are similar among those living with their families and in old age homes, with 32.68% and 34.16% respectively being illiterate and 2.97% and 2.98% respectively having graduated or higher education.

Marital Status

Marital status is an important factor that determines the condition of the elderly in families and society. Lifelong experiences, adaptive strategies, and current circumstances all play a crucial role in shaping the conditions of the elderly, particularly among women. Marital status of the elderly can be categorized as unmarried, married, or widow/widowed’.

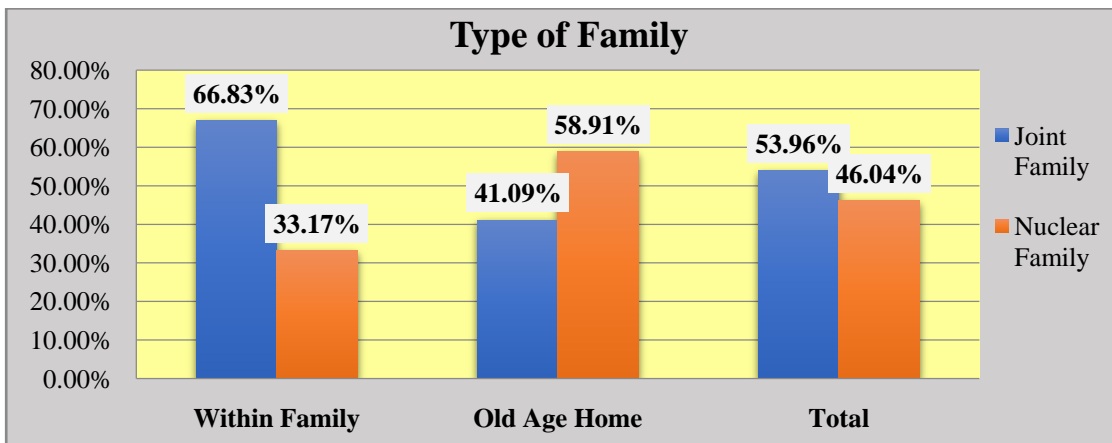




The data from Bar Graph show that among 404 respondents, nearly half (49.76%) are widows or widowers, 45.54% are married, and only 4.70% are unmarried. Approximately two-thirds of the respondents living with their family are married, while 7.92% are unmarried.

Family

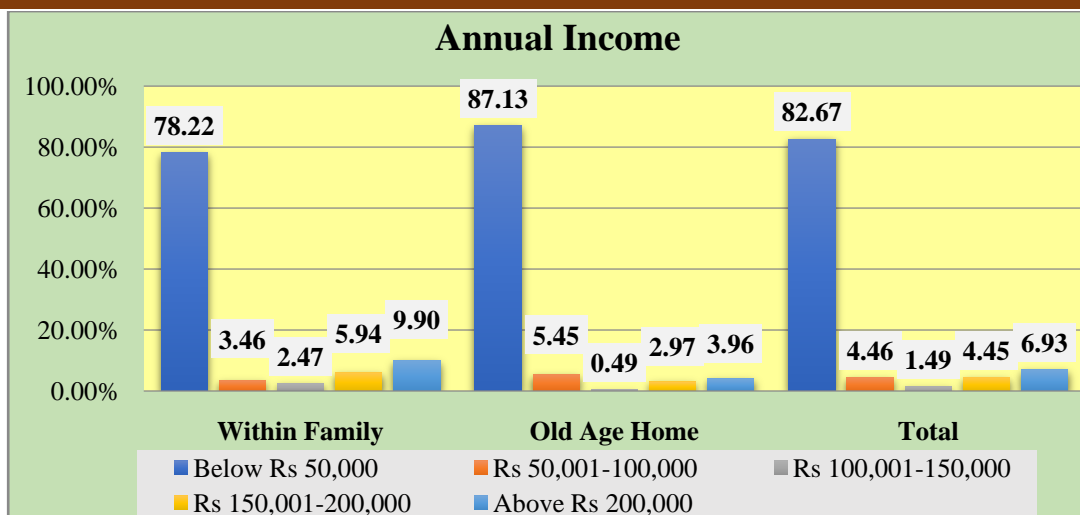
Family is a basic social unit consisting of individuals who are related by blood, marriage, or adoption. It provides emotional support, a sense of belonging, and security. Basically there are two types of families namely Nuclear Family and Joint Family.



The Bar Graph clearly shows the type of family that the respondents belong to. Out of a total of 404 respondents, more than fifty percent (53.96%) had joint families, while the remaining respondents had nuclear families. Two-thirds (66.83%) of the respondents from the old age homes belonged to nuclear families.

Annual Income

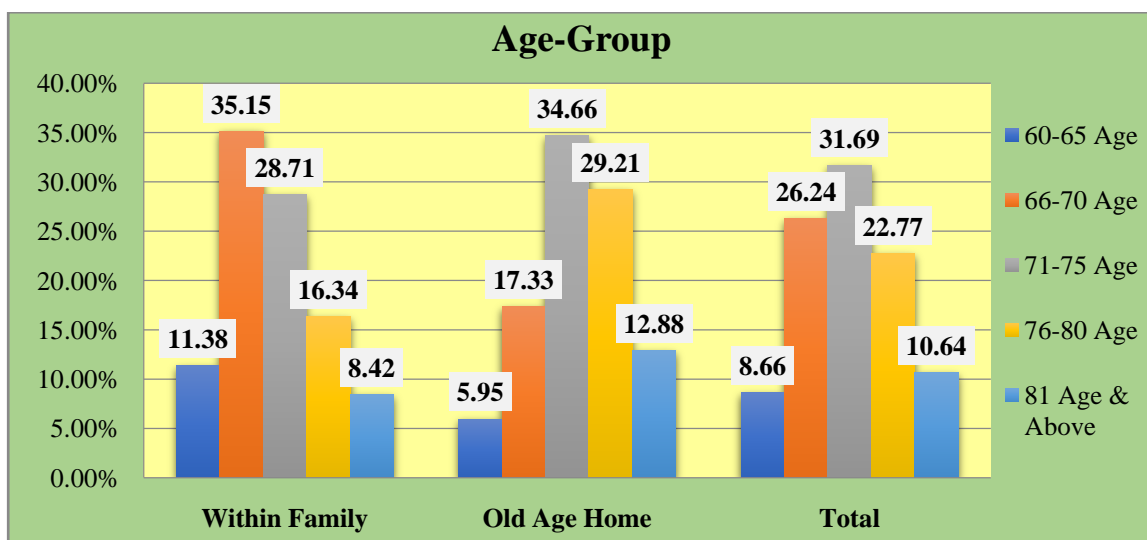
Annual income is an indicator of a person's economic status in society. In general, it is believed that the elderly faces many problems due to their poor economic conditions. Economic security ensures that the elderly is not mistreated by other family members, as it provides financial well-being.



The Bar Graph reveal the annual income of elderly persons within families and old age homes. Out of a total of 404 respondents, the majority (82.67%) had an annual income of below fifty thousand rupees, while only 6.93% had an annual income above two lakh rupees. Approximately four-fifths (78.22% and 87.13%) of the total respondents who live within families and in old age homes, respectively, had an annual income of below fifty thousand rupees.

Age group

Age is a crucial factor in evaluating the biological and psychological well-being of the elderly. It influences various aspects of their lives, including health status, economic conditions, activity levels, family relationships, and social interactions. In modern societies, changes in the social, economic, and political landscape have affected the status of elderly people.

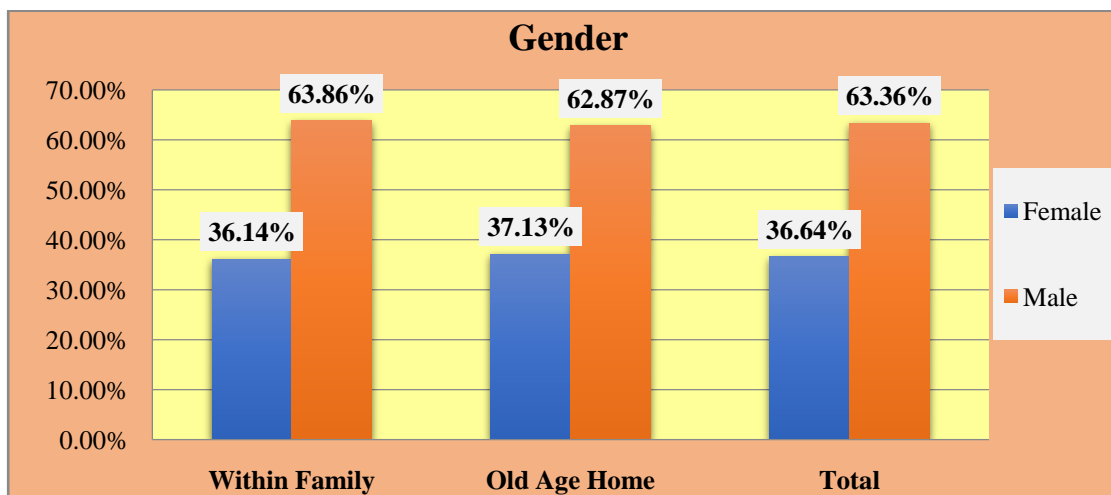




The Bar Graph shows the age of elderly persons within families and in old age homes. Among 404 respondents, nearly one-third (31.69%) were in the 71 to 75 age group, and one-fourth (26.24%) were in the 66 to 70 age group. Among those who lived within families, 35.15% were in the 66 to 70 age group, while among those in old age homes, 34.66% were in the 71 to 75 age group.

Gender

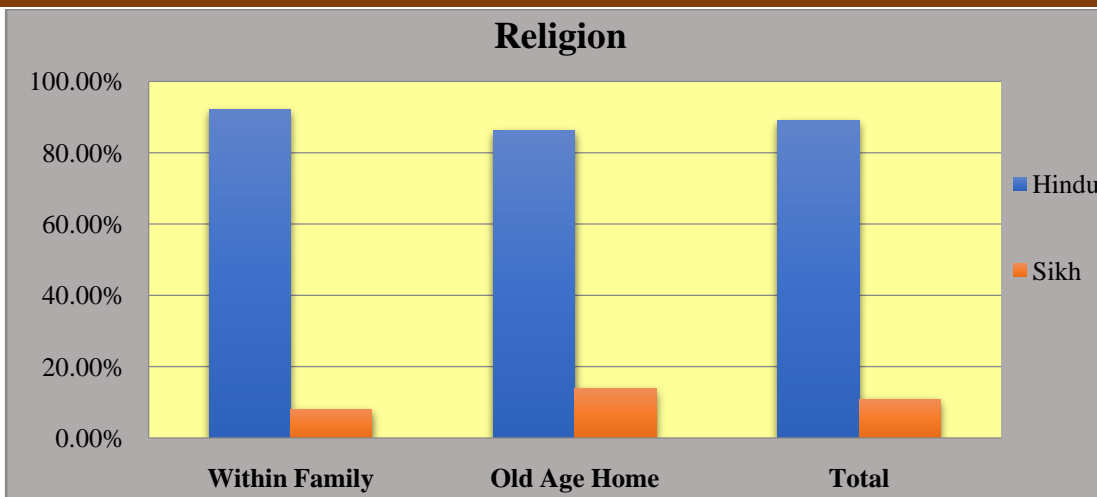
The gender of a person refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define men and women. This includes physical differences such as reproductive organs, hormones, and secondary sexual characteristics, and is typically classified as male or female. It is important to note that gender identity, which refers to a person's sense of themselves as male, female, both, or neither, can be different from the sex assigned at birth.



The bar graph shows the gender of elderly persons within families and in old age homes. Of 404 respondents, 63.36% were male, and 36.64% were female. Among those who lived within families, 63.86% were male, while among those in old age homes, 62.87% were male.

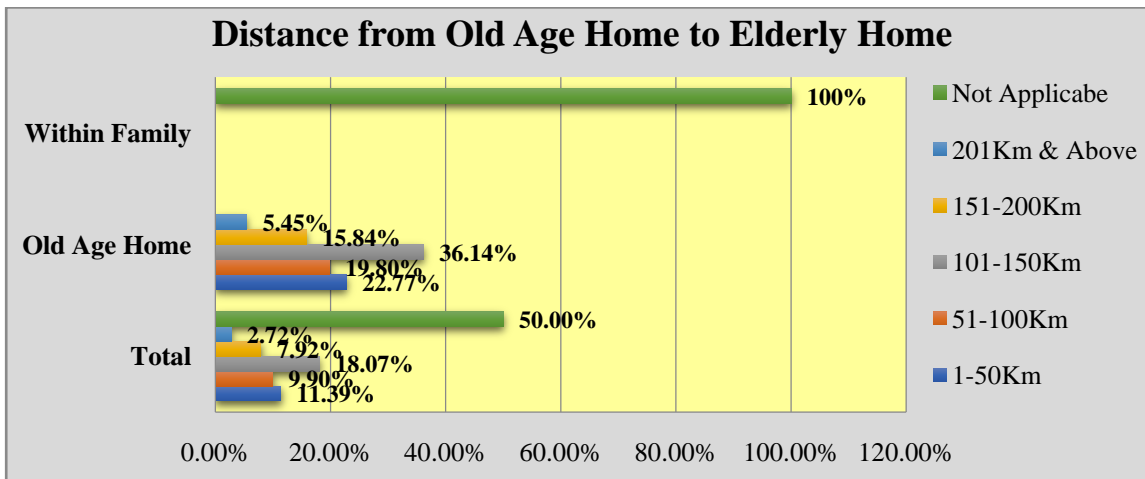
Religion

Fustel de Coulanges' book "The Ancient City" (1894) demonstrates the role of religion in shaping larger social groups and maintaining their existence. This idea is also present in W. Robertson Smith's work, particularly in his "Religion of the Semites" lectures (Bottomore, 1962). Sociologists define religion as a cultural system consisting of shared beliefs and rituals.



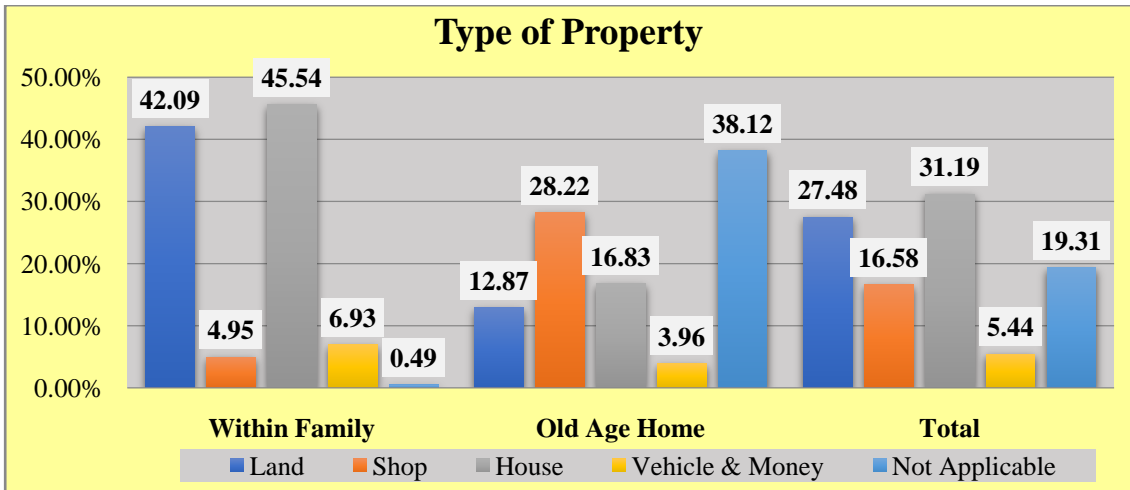
The Bar Graph show the religion of elderly persons within families and in old age homes. Of 404 respondents, 89.11% were Hindu, and 10.89% were Sikh. Among those who lived within families, 92.08% were Hindu, while among those in old age homes, 86.14% were Hindu.

Distance from Old Age Home



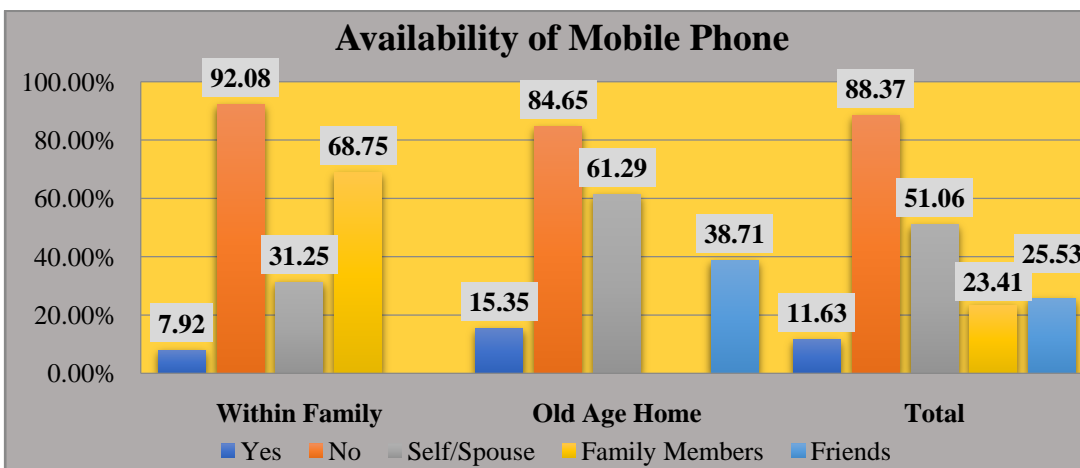
The Bar Graph show the distance from the old age home to the respondent's homes. Of 404 respondents, 36.14% live between 101-150 KM, and 22.77% live between 01-50 KM. This question was not asked of the elderly within families as they already live with their families.

Type of Property



The Bar Graph Figure display the various property types of elderly individuals within families and in old age homes. Of the 404 surveyed respondents, 31.19% own a house but are forced to abandon it due to strained relationships with their children. Over a quarter of the respondents possess land. Notably, 19.31% have no form of property. Within families, 45.54% own a house and 42.09% have land, while 38.12% of those in old age homes have no property and 28.22% own shops.

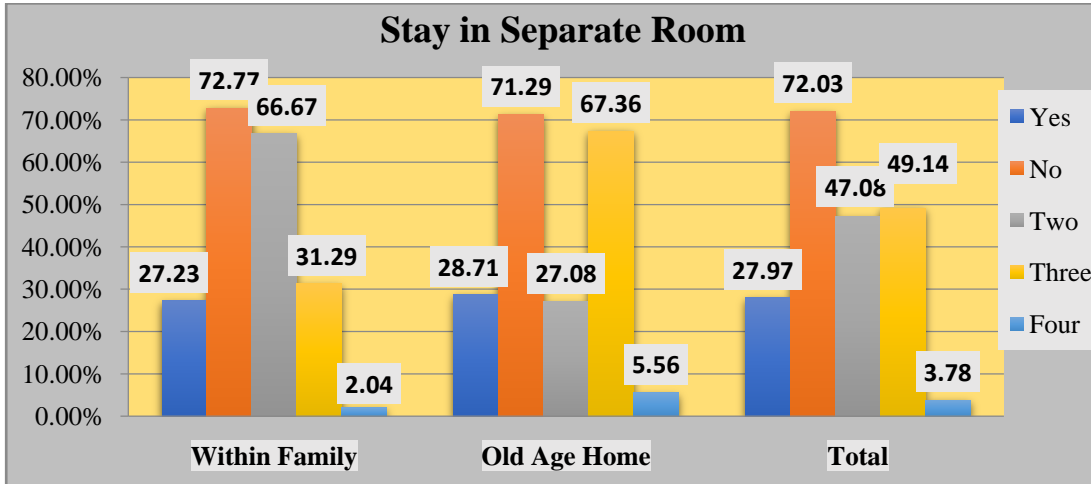
Availability of Mobile Phone



The Bar Graph Figure demonstrate the availability of mobile phones among the surveyed respondents. A large majority, 88.37%, do not have access to mobile phones for communication. This trend is consistent among those living within families (92.08%) and those in old age homes (84.65%). Among the respondents who do own mobile phones, 51.06% recharge their phone

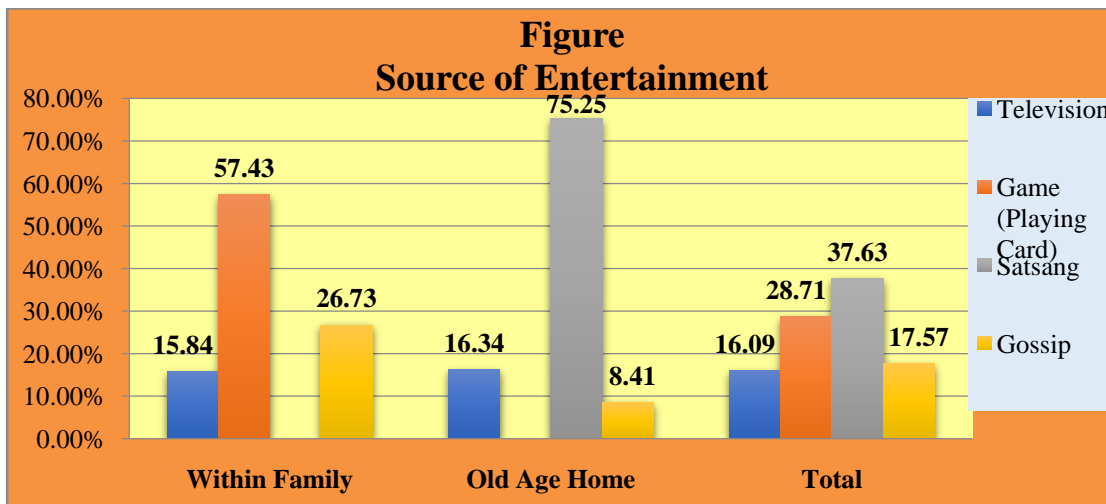
themselves or with the help of their spouse, while 25.53% rely on their friends for recharge assistance.

Stay in Separate Room



The Bar Graph reveals that 72.03% of the respondents do not have a separate room for living, citing a lack of space in their residence and the presence of 2 to 4 members in a single room. Conversely, 27.97% have their own separate room. Among those living within families, 72.77% do not have a separate room, while 71.29% of those in old age homes also have no separate living quarters. When asked about the number of people sharing a room, 49.14% of respondents stated that 3 individuals live in a room, while 47.08% reported that 2 people share a room.

Source of Entertainment





The Bar Graph show that 37.63% of the respondents consider "satsang" as their source of entertainment, stating that it keeps them peaceful and happy. 28.71% mentioned playing card games as their source of entertainment and social enjoyment. Television watching and gossiping also serve as sources of entertainment for the rest of the respondents. Among those living within families, the majority (57.43%) enjoy playing card games, while 26.73% find gossip to be their source of entertainment. For old age home residents, 75.25% cite "satsang" as their main source of entertain

Conclusion

To understand the needs and challenges of the elderly, it is important to know their individual backgrounds. Family history plays a crucial role in shaping one's life, and examining the family history of the elderly can provide insight into their aging experiences. The elderly's background information highlights the diverse perspectives on aging, influenced by factors such as family life, socio-cultural status, and education. Caste is a fixed social grouping based on birth, leading to a hierarchical division of society with assigned occupations. There are restrictions on social interaction and marriage between castes. The caste system has become a controversial issue with political, social, and legal consequences. The result of the study shows the distribution of 404 respondents' castes, both in families and in old age homes. The majority of respondents (27.48%) belong to the Punjabi caste, followed by the Bania (12.87%) and Kumhar (9.41%) castes. Among those living with families, 33.66% are Punjabi, while 21.28% of those in old age homes are Punjabi.

The social background of the elderly, including education, is important in understanding their current circumstances. Education has a major impact on their lifetime adaptation patterns, affecting their lifestyle and living conditions in old age. The study shows that 33.42% of the 404 respondents are illiterate, 25% have only completed primary education, and only 2.97% have graduated or have higher education. The educational levels are similar among those living with families and in old age homes, with a similar proportion being illiterate and having higher education. Marital status is a significant factor that influences the condition of the elderly in families and society. It affects their lifelong experiences, adaptive strategies, and current circumstances. The study shows that among 404 respondents, 49.76% are widows or widowers, 45.54% are married, and only 4.70% are unmarried. Two-thirds of the respondents living with their family are married, while 7.92% are unmarried. The family type of 404 respondents, which consists of joint and nuclear



families. Over half (53.96%) of the respondents belong to joint families and the rest belong to nuclear families. Out of those living in old age homes, 66.83% are from nuclear families.

The majority of the 404 respondents have an annual income of below 50,000 rupees, with 82.67% of them being in this category. Only 6.93% of the respondents have an annual income above 200,000 rupees. The majority of those living in families (78.22%) and old age homes (87.13%) have an annual income of below 50,000 rupees. This information helps in understanding the economic status of the elderly in society and their financial well-being. The study shows the age distribution of 404 elderly people living within families or in old age homes. Approximately 31.69% of the respondents were in the 71 to 75 age group and 26.24% were in the 66 to 70 age group. The age distribution was similar among those living within families and in old age homes, with 35.15% and 34.66% respectively being in the 66 to 70 age group. The study presents the distribution of the elderly by gender. There are 404 respondents in total, with 63.36% being male and 36.64% being female. Among those living within families, 63.86% were male and among those in old age homes, 62.87% were male. The majority (89.11%) of the 404 respondents are Hindu, while only 10.89% are Sikh. The majority of the respondents who lived within families (92.08%) are Hindu, while those in old age homes (86.14%) are predominantly Hindu.

The study shows the property ownership of 404 elderly individuals. 31.19% own a house but have to abandon it due to family issues, while over a quarter of the respondents own land. 19.31% of the surveyed respondents have no form of property. Among those in families, 45.54% own a house and 42.09% own land, while in old age homes, 38.12% have no property and 28.22% own shops. The result of the survey shows the availability of mobile phones among the surveyed respondents. 88.37% of them don't have access to mobile phones for communication, and this trend is consistent among both those living in families (92.08%) and those in old age homes (84.65%). Of the respondents who do own mobile phones, 51.06% recharge their phones themselves or with their spouse's help, and 25.53% rely on their friends for recharge assistance. The study shows the availability of separate living quarters among the surveyed respondents. 72.03% do not have a separate room, due to a lack of space in their residence and having 2 to 4 members living in a single room. Conversely, 27.97% have their own separate room. In families, 72.77% do not have a separate room and 71.29% of those live in old home also lack separate living quarters. Of the respondents, 49.14% reported that 3 people live in a room, while 47.08% stated that 2 people share



a room. The result of the field work reveals the sources of entertainment for the surveyed respondents. 37.63% consider 'satsang' to be their source of entertainment as it keeps them peaceful and happy. 28.71% play card games for entertainment and social enjoyment. Television watching and gossiping also serve as sources of entertainment for the remaining respondents. In families, the majority (57.43%) enjoy playing card games, and 26.73% find gossip to be their source of entertainment. For those in old age homes, 75.25% find 'satsang' to be their main source of entertainment.

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