



A STUDY TO UNDERSTAND THE
YOUNG GENERATION'S PERCEPTION
ON THE ELDERLY AND
ON THE SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY
IN MANGALORE

2014

A Project of
School of Social Work
Roshni Nilaya
Mangalore
&
advantAGE Seniors Consulting
Bangalore

Project Title

To Understand The Young Generation's Perception On The Elderly & On The Services For The Elderly In Mangalore

INTRODUCTION

Since it came into existence in 2001, advantAGE seniors, a care service provider in Bangalore deeply felt the need for community based interventions in elder care. A good deal of past experiences working closely with the elders and their family prompted us to believe that we need more studies and collect more scientific data for a clearer understanding of the needs and aspirations of the aged, in particular the infirm. That is how two likeminded entities, School of Social work, Roshniniya Mangalore and advantAGE seniors, Bangalore formed a consortium to start a joint studies.

For some time, advantAGE seniors has been conscious of the need for a community education program which would focus on the younger generation and not the elderly alone. Believing that any community education program should include the younger generation because our experience taught us that the welfare of the elderly hinges to a larger extent on the attitudes of the young towards the elderly and the ageing. Shortage of funds and manpower made it impossible earlier, to initiate large scale research which would form the basis of such an education program. By associating with School of Social Work, Roshniniya, Mangalore, a like minded partner, a beginning could be made now. Consequently, a consortium was set up under the able leadership of Dr. Rameela Shekhar, Dean, School Of Social Work to pioneer the studies in the field of ageing.

The proposed study aims to highlight the importance of an increased understanding and practical co-operation between generations, particularly between the young and the old. Equally it aims to provide us with the opportunity to reappraise youngster's attitudes to ageing and older people. How influenced and biased are our youth by the negative stereotypes often projected in the media.

As people live longer, the number of older people is growing significantly in our population. This brings with it host of social, political and economic challenges. It becomes increasingly important to gain an insight and understanding into how our older people are perceived by the younger generation as it from these perceptions and attitudes that ageist behaviours, discrimination and mistreatment of older people can develop. The study intends to provide a renewed stimulus to the efforts already begun by the Union government to change through various welfare schemes what negative attitudes we have to being old in our society.

India has a growing and vibrant population of older people. In light of the increasing population of older people and government's commitment to developing an age friendly society it is imperative that attitudes towards ageing and older people are explored. The rationale being that an exploration of prejudices, attitudes and behaviours will inform future education programs and the development of public policy. Therefore, the main aim of this study is to examine the younger generation's perceptions of ageing and older people.

We preferred college going young people for this study because of the fact that the community in which they will spend their adult lives will contain an increasingly large proportion of people over 65 years of age. In future, their attitude to the older generation will be an important factor in the shaping of new national policies for the elders. For this reason, we are anxious to promote the design of an educational program which will help our younger generation to come to terms with the ageing process and develop positive attitudes towards the role that elderly people are capable of playing in the community.

Though our Indian culture relied on great respect to the older generations of late there are more taboo and mistreatment reported across the country against the older people. The main problem by now is the issue of urban migrations (abroad too) where old people are unable to move to the towns and leave their villages. Old generations are usually left unattended and in some circumstance, they undergone some degrading treatment from the others.

If the society managed to educate and proposed more interaction learning mechanism, and integrate the issue of ageing perception into curriculum, then the Indian society should be the

best society that value the old and the young people's contribution. Elders should have their turn to train the youngest generations who are coming after them and therefore; influence them positively to move on with respect of human kind and human dignity. So as a prelude to a more meaningful intervention we hope that the results of the study will get us some useful data and tips.

Objectives

1. To know the profile of the youth – socio- demographic, status of relations with third degree relatives.
2. To understand the youth's perceptions of problems of the elderly
3. To know general perception of the youth about the geriatric population.
4. To understand their knowledge on the availability of varied services for the elderly
5. To understand their opinion on the ways of enhancing the well being of the aged.

Statement of the Problem

Elderly form the group who are nearing the life expectancy of human beings and therefore the end of human life. Euphemisms and terms for old people, as cited in Wikipedia (2014) include, old people (worldwide usage), seniors (American usage), senior citizens (British and American usage), older adults (in the social sciences), the elderly, and elders (in many cultures including the cultures of aboriginal people).The elderly population (60 +) form 8% of the total Indian population (census, 2011).

According to Eric Erickson's theory we move through 8 stages of psychosocial development. The stage of ego integrity vs despair is the last stage. The main task in this stage is to accept one's life as meaningful. To achieve this one needs to look back at one's life with satisfaction. One who achieves this accepts both life and death. If the tasks are not achieved, then the person would experience despair which is a subject of concern. Robert Peck, 1968 (Cited in KHASA, n.d) stated specific tasks which the older adult must address. "The first task for the older person is to develop satisfaction from himself or herself as a person, rather than from an occupational

role or as a parent. The second task is to adjust to the physical declines of aging, rather than becoming absorbed in health problems or physical limitations imposed by aging. The third task is to have satisfaction when reflecting on one's past life and accomplishments, rather than dwelling on the prospect of death". When these two theories are looked into, it is clear that when the tasks are not met there is negative effect on the psychological state of the individual as established by number of studies which brings to fore the fact that the elderly fail to accomplish the tasks during the last stage of life cycle. Some of the common problems faced by the elderly citizens as established by studies are experiencing unhappiness, feeling unloved by family members in addition to age related physical and cognitive changes (Chandwani, Jivarajani, & Jiarajani; 2008). A few other studies have established issues related to dependency, elder abuse, psychiatric morbidity etc as common geriatric problems. In addition to this, anecdotal evidences show the elders' increased feeling of isolation, loss of decision making power in the family and difficulty in living separately which is common in Indian aged population.

Though various services are available for enhancing their well being, it may not be used due to inaccessibility and lack of awareness. With the support rendered to them, the well being of the elderly is ensured. The youth (16- 20 years as defined by the National Youth Policy, India, 2012) form the group that can be actively involved in the welfare of the aged. They are the most productive chunk of the population and are an asset in bringing about change and development in various areas for which their attitudes and perceptions, that determine their behaviour, play a vital role. For this, studying their perception about the elderly and the services for elderly is required based on which their involvement can be determined which is intended to be met with through this proposed project. Though there are western studies on the subject, the dearth of Indian studies underlines importance of the current project.

Literature Review

With the rapid improvement in health care facilities, the life span has improved significantly. However the issues related to the aged is rapidly increasing. A community based cross sectional study on the age group 60 - 64 years showed that chronic morbidity in elderly was significantly higher (56.3%) than acute (7.2%), most commonly affected system by chronic morbidity was muscular-skeletal followed by cardio vascular and gastrointestinal. Psycho- logical problems

were more common in males (12%) than in females (7.7%). Psychological problems were more in lower socio-economic class than higher Class (Gupta, Varshney, Tiwari, Shinde; 2012). The psycho- social issues of the aged has been established by many.

Hence, it becomes increasingly important to identify prevailing perception towards older people in society. Social perception concerns the process by which people interpret information about others and form impression of them. Our perception of other people is both reflected in our thoughts, feelings and actions. Some commonly used terms often used interchangeably with the term perceptions include ageism, attitudes, beliefs, discrimination, prejudice, stereotypes and views (Lyons, 2009).

Extensive literature exists which examines age related perceptions. Overall, previous research in this field has tended to draw on and then compare and contrast the perceptions towards older people within different societal groups, such as children and students. Research into public perceptions of older people and aging has traditionally been based on the assumption that negative attitudes are wide spread (Butler 1969) with numerous studies reporting negative views on older people and aging (Kite 2005; Cathalifaud 2008; Allan and Johnson 2009). Nosek (2002) found that negative implicit attitudes towards older people were the strongest. Importantly, most of these negative views tend to be reported by younger groups (Kite 2005; Woolf 2006; Cottle & Glover 2007).

A recent Health Service Executive (2009) report of Ireland highlighted how people's attitudes and perception can have a significant negative impact on the life of older people. The report threw light on how the negative attitudes can result in elderly abuse and are not can give rise to a culture which creates a fertile environment which encourages elder abuse age discrimination, and devaluation and disempowerment of older people.

Thus the above literature forms strong evidence on how perception determines the behaviour towards elderly which further reflects on the new area of intervention for the helping

professionals. A Nigerian study, for instance, shows that education is a significant factor positively influencing youth perception and attitudes towards elderly (Okoye, Obikeze; 2005).

Intergenerational relations transitions are taking place due to social and cultural changes in society. The generation gap is acknowledged by both the youth and the elderly. The judgments of elderly and the youth about each other determines the extent to which they can live harmoniously with each other. To bridge the gap, to involve the youth in working towards the welfare of the aged knowing the perception becomes important.

Conceptual framework

‘Youth’ are individuals belonging to the age group of 16- 30 years (The National Youth Policy, India; 2012)

‘Elderly’ is any individual who has completed the age of 60 years.

‘Perception’ concerns the process by which people interpret information about others and form impression of them.

‘Services’ means material or non material benefits available for the elderly.

Research Methodology

Coverage

The universe of the proposed study will be youth belonging to the age group 16-30 years living in Mangalore district. Population of the study comprises of youth (16-30 years) from

1. The colleges affiliated to Mangalore University and
2. Other institutions - agencies, offices, families etc

under Mangalore City Corporation. Youth from both urban and rural areas would be considered.

Sampling: Initially colleges would be chosen through random sampling. From the chosen colleges the youth would be further chosen on a random basis. The youth from society would be selected through convenient sampling.

Sample size: For the pilot study the sample size would be 100 (60 youth from colleges and 40 from society). A small group of 10 youth would also be involved in Focussed Group Discussions (FGDs). For the main study the sample size would be 800 youth (600 from colleges, 200 from society). In addition to this, some would also be involved in FGDs which would continue till data saturation.

Data Collection and Analysis

Both qualitative and quantitative data would be collected. While the qualitative data would be collected through the FGDs with a small group of youth, the quantitative data would be collected through the use of self report questionnaire.

An interview guide for FGDs and a self report questionnaire that would tap the responses of the youth based on the objectives would be first prepared and validated. Face validation would be used. To test the reliability of the interview guide and the questionnaire a pilot study would be conducted. The youth for FGDs would be selected based on their availability. The students / NSS volunteers of the School of Social Work, Roshni Nilaya, Mangalore would be involved in data collection. To ease the process the volunteers, would be divided into groups, where by one group can attend the respondents from the colleges, under Mangalore University, within Mangalore Corporation. And other could reach out to the youth from society. The data would be analysed and needful changes in the interview guide/ questionnaire would be made. Once the questionnaire is finalised the main data collection process will be initiated.

The data that emerges out of the FGDs would be analysed manually. A statistical package SPSS version.17.0 will be set to do the quantitative analysis.

Implications

1. For the helping profession: Based on the perception of the youth the need based interventions for the youth can be developed. To elucidate: if the perception is negative through the interventions of the youth the same can be improved and in case where the

perception of the youth towards the elderly is good then it can be further enhanced. Thus a positive perception can be developed and their role towards welfare of the elderly can be established.

2. For the youth: The study implications lay in involving the youth in the welfare of the elderly.
3. The study enables one to appraise oneself of the ways in which the intergenerational relations can be strengthened
4. Policy making: The outcomes of this research will generate first hand research evidences which will be of interest to policy makers. Pro aged policies can be initiated. A ground for enhancing elder's well being is established.

Duration of the project

The process of preparing the interview guide/ questionnaire (validation and establishing reliability) would take a month. The duration for the data collection would be approximately 10 months. The whole process could take approximately 15 months for deriving a complete outcome.

Personnel

The project would include:

Principal Investigators: Dr. Rameela Shekhar, Dean, PG Dept, School of Social Work, Roshni Nilaya, Mangalore-575002

Dr Elizebeth Tanner , John Hopkins Hospital , Maryland USA

Co- investigators:

1 Dr Madhava , NSS Co ordinator , School of Social Work , Roshni Nilaya

2 Mr Roshan Jacob, Director , advantAge Seniors , Bangalore

3 Saumya Nair, advantAge Seniors , Bangalore

Research Assistants: Qualification: Masters in Social Work. The Research Assistants would also be involved in the above mentioned tasks until the closure of the project.

Budget

Purpose	Amount
Honorarium for research associate	Rs 3,60,000 (Rs 15,000 per month)
Honorarium for each research assistant	Rs 2,52,000 (Rs 10,500 per month)
TA & DA	Rs 70, 000/-
Internet	Rs 15, 000/-
Stationary	Rs 46, 000/-
Contingency	Rs 38,000/-
Printing of the completed project	Rs 30, 000/-
Total	Rs 8,11,000/-

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