

Received Date: January 2022

Revised: March 2022

Accepted: June 2022

Social Condition of Elderly People of Pashupati Elderly's Home

Archana Khanal*

Abstract

All countries have to face population aging sooner or later, depending on their degree of development. However, elderly care is predicted to soon become a major concern for developing countries such as Nepal. Both quantitative and qualitative investigations were conducted on elderly people living in Pashupati Elderly's Home in Kathmandu using the descriptive and e-research design. Thirty elderly people were the respondents of this study. Face-to-face interview, KII, and observation methods were used to collect data on the elderly and their attitudes toward senior citizen homes. Most elderly people are forced by different factors like loneliness, family dispute, disability, poverty, and domination in their families to take shelter in old people's homes for several years. Some were living happily in the home, though they missed their family on some occasions because they could have spent their leisure time by sharing their emotions and feelings with same-age groups.

Keywords: Condition, social, elderly people, loneliness, & elderly home.

Introduction

Ageing is a natural and common occurrence in all societies. Socially constructed meanings of age, such as the responsibilities allocated to older people, are more essential, and their loss can be accompanied by physical deterioration in some situations. According to WHO, "old" is defined as anyone over the age of 60, and Nepal has adopted WHO's definition of "old" (Bhandari, 2019). In certain developed countries, a person over the age of 65 is considered old (Sainbule, 2019). When the elderly constitutes a larger proportion of the total population, the population is said to be ageing.

In Nepal, the government has categorized the population according to the age group into young, mature, and aged. Young people who are less than 15 years of age and elderly people who are 60 years of age and over are taken as dependent and thus unproductive, whereas

* Ms. Khanal is a Lecturer at the Department of Sociology, Patan Multiple Campus, TU, Lalitpur.
Email: khanalarchu@yahoo.com

the mature population (15-59 years of age) is conceived as productive (economically active) and reproductive (Subedi, 2004). Ageing is an emerging issue in Nepal. The aged population in Nepal is increasing day by day as compared to the last decade. The elderly population in Nepal is growing at a rate three times faster than the annual population growth rate (1.35%) between 2001 and 2011 (Bhandari, 2021). The study shows that the proportion of the elderly population is low in Terai compared to mountain and hilly areas (Aryal, 2019). According to the 2011 CBS, the elderly population is 8.13 percent of the total population of Nepal and the dependency ratio is high. The elderly is usually regarded with respect in Nepalese society. In Nepal, an elderly man is socially involved in numerous village matters, such as settling disputes, arranging marriages, and supervising various rites such as nuptials, initiation, birthdays, and death. If the person is wealthy, his patronage for village affairs would be greater because he helps the needy, organizes regular feasts, and provides hospitality to visitors.

In the Hindu religious system, parents are considered gods, and children are encouraged to respect them as if they were deities. The elderly is cared for and honored in Nepalese society thanks to the socialization process. During significant occasions such as alphabet learning (Saraswati puja) and numerous festivals such as Dashain, children are initially subjected to receiving blessings from the old. Not only youngsters, but also visiting relatives, accept the blessing by prostrating themselves at the feet of the elderly. In Nepalese society, children are raised in such a way that they are taught that not taking care of the needs of the elderly, disrespecting the elderly, and emotionally hurting them by speaking anything can result in sins that cannot be atoned for. For the socialization of children, the elderly in Nepal plays a vital role. Children are socialized by the means of storytelling, which includes sharing their life stories. As a consequence, children are integrated into the family and society easily. Since the elderly provide love and care to the grandchildren, children grow up with plenty of knowledge of their grandparents and are closely attached to them. In Nepali family, when father becomes older, bed ridden and dying, all the managerial tasks of household are inherited by the son. It seems that the loyalty and attachments of the children to the aged parents, especially the father is because of the traditions of inheritance which is a major economic and political factor.

Especially in the rural areas, elderly people tend to be illiterate, have limited sources of income, and have poor health and nutrition, leading to an increased burden of both infectious and chronic diseases and further, they lack access to general health and social services. Joint family system was the traditional familiar system in Nepal. But because of modernization and development activities, the joint family system is ruptured. In this

family hierarchy, age and sex are the main ordering principles. Elders have great authority than young in Nepalese society (Regmi, 1993).

However, it has begun to represent the elderly as feeble, dependent, and vulnerable members of the household and society (Subedi, 2004), which was uncommon in rural culture. They are physically frail, psychologically fragile, and financially disadvantaged, but they are also a wealth of knowledge. In many affluent countries, NGOs, INGOs, and health and welfare organizations are looking for volunteers among the expanding number of retirees (Healy, 2004). Elderly individuals play an essential role in supporting and maintaining informal social networks, which tie families across generations. They not only receive assistance and support, but they are also net providers, at least up to the age of 75 (Grille, 2014). They can give child care, financial, economic, and emotional support to family members, as well as aid others outside the household with daily living tasks. Grandparenting has become an important social duty in an age when people have more living parents than children. Grandparenthood is advantageous not just to grandparents who value it as an essential part of their lives, but it is also beneficial to grandkids (Frempong et al., 2013). At the same time, elderly adults follow the law more than other age groups since they commit fewer crimes against property and people (Healy, 2004). As a result, it is critical to recognize these social elements of the aged population in order to properly deal with them by providing them with adequate respect to survive in society.

The elderly's home, elderly people's daycare center, and elderly people's club are all rapidly opening for the administration of elderly people's lives, just as Montessori and child care centers are (MoWCSC, 2017). Elderly homes serve an important function in providing shelter to the homeless and elderly who have no one to care for them. Elderly homes are places where elderly people can reside and be cared for and fed, either for a fee or for free (Supreme Court, 2017). These houses provide an alternative destination for elderly people who have recognized their family's troubles. In Nepal, these elderly-oriented organizations for the welfare of the elderly are not on the government's priority list (Lamichhane, 2017).

The combined effect of decreased fertility, lower mortality, and improved health systems has resulted in an increase in the proportion of the world's elderly population. The world's population is aging, and the number of elderly people in developing countries is fast increasing in comparison to developed countries (Aryal, 2019). The aging of the population poses numerous challenges to the social, economic, and healthcare systems (Bhandari, 2019). To address these concerns and needs, the Nepalese government has created different policies and social security programs such as Old Age Allowance (OAA),

old age pension for public servants, old age home, and other health-related services. The Nepalese government is committed to numerous regional and international conventions that enhance the wellbeing of the country's older citizens. Former Prime Minister Manmohan Adhikari established the Old Age Allowance for senior citizens. In December 1994, the CPN (UML) government announced a universal flat pension of 100 rupees for all citizens over the age of 75. (Rai, 2017). At the moment, the OAA has been enhanced to Rs 4,000 under the social security program, and the government is distributing it to people over the age of 68 beginning in fiscal year 2022/23, which begins in mid-July. Previously, it was available only to people over the age of 70. (Nepal News, 2022). The allowance is distributed through municipal ward offices in urban areas.

The Government of Nepal (GoN) has enacted a number of measures to enhance the wellbeing of senior citizens. Similarly, the fiscal year (2078/79 B.S.) provides for the free distribution of 98 different drugs from government health institutions. It has also been said that rehabilitation centers with health services will be constructed for people with complete disabilities, and that free screening for non-communicable diseases will be conducted once a year in local level health institutions for inhabitants over the age of 40. The government intends to build a geriatric care facility with 165 beds and a hospital with 45 beds in Gothatar, Kathmandu (MoF, 2022).

In 1938 B.S., Nepal created Panchadewal Pakshala (a place to cook food), which later became known as Social Welfare Centre Elderly's Home Pashupati in 2034 B.S., (Pashupati Elderly's Home, 2021). The Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens oversees the PEHP. This is the sole government-run nursing home. Many privately opened elderly homes have been sprung up to provide care and support to the elderly, and many elderly have begun to live in those homes. In 1938 B.S., Nepal created Panchadewal Pakshala (a place to cook food), which later became known as Social Welfare Centre Elderly's Home Pashupati in 2034 B.S., (Pashupati Elderly's Home, 2021). The Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens oversees the PEHP. This is the sole government-run nursing home. Many privately opened elderly homes have sprung up to provide care and support to the elderly, and many of those homes have begun to live in those homes. These are the needs of today's Nepalese society, and in order to establish such institutions for the elderly, NGOs, social workers, and their agencies should step forward, and the state should assist them in the future. According to the present status of elderly homes, there are approximately 80 elderly homes associated with the Social Welfare Council from 2034 B.S. to 2077 B.S. (SWC, 2020), with approximately 1700 elderly residents. Many of them are destitute and in need of decent care, assistance, and basic necessities.

In the last 10 years' data, there are 20 elderly homes which got approval from the SWC and they are from all over the Nepal. The elderly home suffers from a variety of issues such as physical facilities, infrastructure, and supplementary support, among others. As a result, the elderly in nursing homes may not enjoy their daily lives. This is a severe problem that has to be discovered and addressed. But the key here is whether these homes are functioning correctly and giving adequate care to the elderly. As a result, this study is based on elderly adults who are residents of PEHP.

Objectives

The general objective of this study is to analyze and identify the social aspects of elderly people living in elderly homes in Pashupati elderly's home, Kathmandu. The specific objectives of this study are to identify the social background of elderly people and examine the different reasons for coming to stay in elderly's home.

Research Methodology

The elderly people who were living in Pashupati Elderly's Home in Kathmandu were taken as respondents and employees working there as key informants. It includes the process of data collection, the tools and techniques used, how they are used, and likewise this study was qualitative and quantitative in nature and followed a descriptive and explanatory research design. There are 99 elderly people residing in Pashupati Elderly Home. Only 30 elderly male and female respondents are the subjects of this study so, the researcher has used the simple random sample to collect data from the population. Data has been collected by face-to-face interviews with elderly people based on an interview schedule. With the help of field observation, the daily routine, religious behavior, food habits, sanitation, facilities for bathing and drinking water, and how they spent time in general were observed. Some case studies have been done with old people and they have recorded their life history. Data from the interviews and other qualitative methods was in the form of written notes and transcripts of tape recordings. The collected data was analyzed using both descriptive and statistical methods.

Data Analysis and Discussions

Age Distribution of the Respondents

In demographic analysis, the age structure of the population is the most important explanatory variables. If age distribution is skewed, all age-specific patterns of vital events are eventually affected. The importance of age and is not limited to demographic studies but also to many of a country's socioeconomic and development plans.

Table 1: Distribution of the respondents by age group

Age group	No. of respondents	Percent
65-69	4	13.33
70-74	6	20.00
75-79	12	40.00
80-84	5	16.67
85-90	3	10.00
Total	30	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2021

In the study area, forty percent (majority) of all respondents are between the ages of 75 and 79, twenty percent are in the 70-74 age group, and another 10 percent are between the ages of 85 and 90, which was shown in the above table.

Sex, Religion and Education Wise Distribution of Respondents

In any study, the primary demographic data point is sex. It allows us to understand which sex group is primarily living in an elderly home. Religion, too, has a significant impact on the lives of the elderly. As individuals grow older, they tend to have more beliefs, and their practices become more religiously based. Nepalese Hindus account for roughly 80 percent of the population. Education is the most important determinant of a country's development. Education is critical in all fields. Education is crucial in development operations. Similarly, it is vital for the elderly to become educated or literate in order to improve their well-being and gain new information in various fields.

Table 2: Distribution of the respondents by sex, religion and educational status

Sex	Number	Percent	Religions	Number	Percent	Education	Number	Percent
Male	12	40	Hindu	23	76.67	Literate	8	26.67
Female	18	60	Buddhist	7	23.33	Illiterate	22	73.33
Total	30	100		30	100		30	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Among 30 respondents 73.33 illiterate, whereas only 26.67 percent are literate. More respondents (23) followed the Hindu religion. The majority of respondents (80%) belong

to a joint family, while 20 percent belong to a nuclear family.

Marital Status and Caste/Ethnic Composition of the Respondents

Marital status has a strong effect on the situation of elderly women in Nepal regarding family care and support. Caste is one of the major social variables to recognize the individual. Whether they belong to Brahmin, Chhetri, Newar, Dalit etc. Most of them in that elderly home are of Brahmin, Chhetri, and Newar.

Table 3: Distribution of the respondents by marital status and caste/ethnic group

Marital status						Caste/ethnic group							
Married		Unmarried		Widow		Brahmin		Chhetri		Newar		Others	
No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
11	36.67	9	30.0	10	33.33	11	36.67	7	23.33	8	26.67	3	10.0

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Note: Total number of respondents = 30

The above table depicts that, the Brahmins outnumber the other groups, with 36.67 percent of the population being Brahmin, followed by 23.33 percent Newari and 26.67 percent Chhetri. The majority of respondents (36.67%) were married, while 30 percent were unmarried and 33.33 percent were widowed.

Only 30 percent have experienced familial violence, whereas 70 percent are violence-free. The majority of the elderly suffer from coughing and pain, with 56.67 percent suffering from asthma and 23.33 percent suffering from COPD. Chronic disease affects 26.67 percent of the population, while it affects the other 73.33 percent when the elderly want assistance; they are assisted by health personnel, family members, and friends. Only 10 percent of respondents own land, while the other 90 percent do not. The majority of older people's expenses are in medicine, with 50 percent spent on it, and clothing accounting for only 33.33 percent. Ninety percent of all respondents are aware of the allowance, while ten percent are unaware. Allowances are received by 10 percent of respondents, whereas 90 percent are not received the allowances. Upon arriving at this senior home, 30 percent of the elderly receive assistance from friends and relatives, respectively, and 10 percent from family members, 10 percent from the landlord, and 10 percent from the RM chairwoman. In such facilities, 60 percent of residents are content, 30 percent are lonely, and 10 percent are depressed. Similarly, 83.33 percent respondents

are happy inside their elderly home and 16.67 percent of them are unhappy. Inside the elderly's home, 43.34 percent of respondents' relatives come to visit them, and 56.67 percent of respondents' relatives do not come to visit them. While visiting 70 percent of the respondents' relatives brought them the materials, but 30 percent did not bring anything. Along with sharing feelings, 80 percent respondents share their feelings with friends, while 20 percent do not. 80 percent of the participants say that the behavior of the staff towards them is good, and 20 percent of them say that fair behavior is shown which was presented in the above chart.

Conclusion

Old age is an unavoidable stage of life. The elderly has a wealth of information and experience, but they are frequently overlooked and mistreated. On the one hand, their life expectancy is increasing due to health facilities and other advances and services, but on the other hand, the care, respect, and affection they deserve are declining. Most elderly people are forced to live in nursing facilities for numerous years due to issues such as loneliness, family conflict, disability, poverty, and family dominance. They do not want to stay in nursing homes if they have a good reputation in their family. But it has become their compulsion since they have no one to look after and nowhere to go.

The elderly homes primarily house elderly females (particularly widows and separated elderly) and unmarried elderly due to their low economic and social status. As a result, the government should listen to their concerns and take appropriate action to ensure their well-being. They do not own any property, have no source of income, and are in a desperate condition. Others, even their own relatives, defrauded them of their property ownership. As a result, there should be a legal framework in place to punish those who defraud the elderly. They are disabled and have chronic ailments as well. According to the survey, elderly individuals who are physically able also remain idle, sleep, talk with friends, go around, and occupy their time during the day. As a result, there is a need for the provision of income-generating activities that are appropriate for them and will assist them in becoming economically independent. As a result, the government should examine the circumstances of the elderly people who are now living in nursing homes and adopt various programs and policies for their general growth.

References

- Acharya, P. (2011). The situation of population ageing and social security for elderly people in Nepal. *Health Prospect, 10*, 61–63.
- Aryal, G. (2019). The status of elderly people in Nepal. *Patan Pragya, 5*(1), 11–18.

<https://www.academia.edu/45478383>

- Bhandari, K. (2019). Social security system of elderly population in Nepal. *NUTA Journal*, 6, 18–24. <https://www.sciencegate.app/document/10.3126/nutaj.v6i1-2.23223>
- Bhandari, K. (2021). Demographic process of population ageing in Nepal. *Patan Pragya*, 9(2), 115–127. <https://www.sciencegate.app/document/10.3126/nutaj.v6i1-2.23223>
- Frempong, F., Adjei, P. O. W., & Iddrisu, A. (2013). Exploring recreational activities of the aged in Jachie in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. *International Journal of Physical and Social Sciences*, 3(6), 62.
- Gautam, T. R. (2008). Migration and the problem of old age people in Nepal. *Dhaulagiri Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 2, 145–160.
- Gorman, M. (2004). *Age and security*. Help Age International, London, UK.
- Grille, R. (2014). *Overpopulation is not the problem-a sustainable world begins! Heart to Heart Parenting*. <https://hearttoheartparenting.org/index.php/2014/05/01/overpopulation-is-not-the-problem-a-sustainable-world-begins/>
- Healy, J. (2004). *The benefits of an ageing population. Discussion paper*. Australia Institute. Australian National University. https://australiainstitute.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/DP63_8.pdf
- Help Age Global Network (HAGN). (2019). *Ageing population in Nepal*. <https://ageingasia.org/ageing-population-nepal>.
- Khanal, H. (1998). *Status report on population aging in Nepal*. [Unpublished report]. UNFPA.
- Khanal, R. (2020, May 29). *Minimum eligible age for elderly allowance reduced to 68 from 70 years*. Nepal Republic Media Pvt Ltd.
- Lamichhane, S. (2017). *Senior citizens and old age homes: A study of pushing factors and level of satisfaction in old age homes of Kaski district*. Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology, Tribhuvan University.
- Mishra, S., & Chalise, H. N. (2018). Health status of elderly living in government and private old age home in Nepal. *Asian Journal of Biological Sciences*, 11, 173–178.
- Ministry of Finance (MoF). (2022). *Nepal budget 2078/79 B.S.* Ministry of Finance, Kathmandu.
- Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens (MoWCSC). (2017). *Diwa Sewa Kendrako Addhyan Pratibedan*. Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens, Kathmandu.

- Nepal News. (2022). *Old age allowance from the age of 68*. Nepal News. <https://www.nepalnews.com/s/nation/old-age-allowance-from-the-age-of-68>
- Poudel, B., & Devkota, B. (2020). Elderly's contribution in employment generation a study of Mandandeupur municipality, Kavreplanchowk. *Patan Pragya*, 7(1), 55–65.
- Regmi, R. R. (1993). Socio-economic and cultural aspects of ageing in Nepal. *Occasional papers in Sociology and Anthropology*, 3, 28–46.
- Sainbule, M. (2019). *Jestha Nagarikko Sashaktikaran. Empowerment*, 22(15), 34–42.
- Sharma, S. D. (2019). An ethnography of old-age homes and senior-citizens in Devghat. *Research Nepal Journal of Development Studies*, 2(2), 129–141.
- Shrestha, H. S., & Satyal, V. R. (2003). *Social security and pension in Nepal*. South Asian Network of Economic Institutes (SANEI).
- Subedi, B. (2004). The aged and the marginal: Social geography of older people in Nepal. *Himalayan Review* 35, 1–18.
- Supreme Court. (2017). *Jestha Nagarikko Adhikar Awam Upachar Sambandhi Jankari Pustak*. Access to justice commission, Supreme Court, Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Social Welfare Council (SWC). (2020). *List of NGOs affiliated with SWC. Social Welfare Council*. https://www.swc.org.np/sites/default/files/downloads/NGOs-affiliated-with-SWC-%20upto%20F.Y.%202075_76.pdf
- Speck, S. (2017). They moved to city areas, abroad: Views of the elderly on the implications of out-migration for the middle hills of western Nepal. *Mountain Research and Development*, 37(4): 425–435.
- Thapa, B. (2020). *Rehabilitative approach in elderly care homes in Kathmandu, Nepal*. Satakunta University of Applied Sciences.
- World Health Organization (WHO). (2014). *World health statistics*. <https://www.who.int/news/item/15-05-2014-world-health-statistics-2014>
- Yadav, R. (2012). Aging population in Nepal: Challenges and management. Academic voices. *A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 2(1), 48–53.