

## **A Study of Depression among the Institutionalized Elders**

**Kavitha\***

Research Scholar

Department of Social Work

JSS Research Foundation, University of Mysore,

Mysuru – 570006

E-mail: [kavithasiddappaji@gmail.com](mailto:kavithasiddappaji@gmail.com)

**Dr. Kumudini Achchi\*\***

Assistant Professor

PG Department of Social Work

JSS College of Arts, Commerce and Science

B. N. Road, Mysuru – 570025

E-mail: [kumudiniachchi@gmail.com](mailto:kumudiniachchi@gmail.com)

---

### **Abstract**

*Ageing is a natural and universal phenomenon. It is also considered as an inevitable developmental process which bring changes in physical, psychological, social, emotional, economic and cultural aspects. The world is rapidly aging, the number of elder person 60 years and above increasing at a faster rate. The factors such as industrialisation, urbanisation and lack of family care and support causing physical, psychological, social and emotional suffering and depression is a common mental disorder which affects elder population to a greater extent. A study was conducted to understand level of depression among institutionalized elders living in old age homes in selected districts of Karnataka state. Descriptive and exploratory research design and simple random sampling design was adopted for the present study. Geriatric depression scale was adopted as a tool to elicit data from 240 elderly respondents living at old age homes / day care centres from each district and SPSS package was used to analyse the data. Study reveals that institutionalized elders suffers from depression due to various psychosocial and cultural factors such as loss of spouse, physical disability or illness, loneliness, isolated from family life and lack of social roles and responsibilities to perform increases the level of depression among the institutionalized elders in the present context.*

**Keywords:** *Depression, institutionalized elders,*

### **Introduction:**

Old age is a universal biological fact and a natural process, Ageing is the dynamic process, which brings changes in the physical, psychological, social and cultural phenomenon. Thus, old age is considered as a second childhood period as elders requires same amount of the care and protection as the child. (Jancy, 2012). Ageing is a continuous, irreversible, universal

process, which starts from conception and end at the death of an individual. In the human lifespan, Old age is the last phase of life cycle. (Dr. Sanjoy Roy, 2011)

The world is rapidly aging, the number of elder person 60 years and above increasing at a faster rate. Ageing of population is increasing all over the world at a faster phase with the fall of fertility rate, mortality rate and impact of medical technology. At world-wide ageing of population has become a global phenomenon. An increase of old (60+) population was 20 million in 1951 to 107 million in 2010, and expected to increase to 198 million in 2030, 326 million in 2050.

As the population of the elders is growing at a faster phase, factors such as disintegration of joint family system, industrialisation, urbanisation and lack of family care and support causing physical, psychological, social and emotional suffering among elders and depression is a common mental disorder which affects elder population to a greater extent.

Psychological well-being is an important aspect of health. Psychological problems from which elderly suffer from are memory impairments, depression, sleeplessness, fear, anxiety, social adjustment, and insecurity. Among them depression is most important psychological illness from which elders suffers to a greater extent.

### **Depression**

Depression is a state of low mood and aversion to activity that affects ones thoughts, behaviour and feelings. According to Beck (1967), depression consists of negative feelings about one's self, one's world and one's future. A triad of feelings of hopelessness, worthlessness and helplessness is often observed. It interferes with an individual's ability to function and causes great distress to him/her (Geist and Jefferson, 1997). The changes that often come in later life – retirement, the death of loved ones, increased isolation, and medical problems – can lead to depression.

Depression prevents from enjoying life. It affects sleep, appetite, and physical health. The important causes for the depression are health problems, loneliness and isolation, fear of death, bereavement, changes in traditional roles and responsibilities, family disorganisation etc., Choudhary, 2014 says that 10 percent of people over 65 years have depression and an estimated 2 percent have suffering from severe depression in India. Elders living alone in residential or nursing care and those with physical stresses or disabilities are more at risk, with some 30 percent affected by depression.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The study aims is achieving the below said objectives.

1. To study the causes for depression among the institutionalised elders.
2. To gauge the effects of depression in geriatric care.
3. To suggest the effective remedial measures to improve psycho-social well-being among the geriatric population.

To achieve the above objectives, a study was conducted to understand level of depression among institutionalized elders living in old age homes in selected districts of Karnataka state. Descriptive and exploratory research design and simple random sampling design was adopted for the present study. Geriatric depression scale was adopted as a tool to elicit data from 240 elderly

respondents living at old age homes / day care centres from each district and SPSS package was used to analyse the data.

### Results and Discussion:

**Table 01:** Showing the Demography the elderly respondents.

Age- group	Frequency	Percentage
<b>60-69 Years</b>	81	33.8%
<b>70-79 Years</b>	89	37.1%
<b>80 Years &amp; above</b>	70	29.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>240 Respondents</b>	<b>100%</b>

In the above table, demography of the elders considered for study was shown. Elders above the age group of 60 years were considered as respondents. The data from the above table shows the demography of the elders living in institutions, 33.8 percent of respondents are between the age group of 60-69 years, 37.1 percent of elderly respondents are between the age group of 70-79 years old and 29.2 percent of respondents are age group of 80 years and above. Thus, majority of the elders are between the age group of 70-79 years and above in the present study.

**Table 02:** Showing social causes for depression among institutionalized elders.

Sl.No	Causes	F	P
01	Disintegration of Joint family	38	15.8%
02	Social isolation and loneliness	96	40.0%
03	Changes in social support system	85	35.4%
04	Increase in old age dependency ratio	21	8.8%
<b>Total</b>		<b>240 Respondents</b>	<b>100%</b>

(F-Frequency, P- Percentage)

The problems of the elderly have been considered as one of the main social problem in Indian society during 21<sup>st</sup> century. The changes in the demographic structure during last few decades in developing countries due to decline in fertility, mortality and migration of the population have made the elders a socially more noticeable section of the society. Disintegration of joint family system, social isolation and loneliness, Changes in care and support of elders by family members and increase in physical, social, psychological, emotional, economic and cultural dependence results in depression among the institutionalised elders. 15.8% of respondents expressed the that reason for depression is due to disintegration of joint family system and spread of nuclear family system, 40.0% of respondents view that social isolation and loneliness due to busy work schedule among working population results in depression, 35.4% respondents expressed changes in social care and support by spread of old age homes and day care centres and 8.8% of respondents expressed that increase in old age dependency results in depression in the modern phenomenon.

Social interaction and support in the last years of life is considered as important for psychological well-being.

**Table 03:** Showing Psychological causes for depression among institutionalized elders.

Sl.No	Causes	F	P
01	Anxiety	160	66.7%
02	Stress	31	12.9%
03	Low self esteem	11	4.6%
04	Adjustment problem	37	15.4%
<b>Total</b>		<b>240 Respondents</b>	<b>100%</b>

**(F-Frequency, P- Percentage)**

Psychological well-being is an important aspect of health. Disturbances in the psychological health from various factors such as health problems, family disorganisation, migration of the children, loneliness and the feeling of empty nest, lack of traditional roles and responsibilities, loss of spouse, technological advancements in the society, attitudes and lifestyles of the present generation are changing and diminishing acceptance of family responsibilities towards one's elders results in the psychological illness in elderly. Some Psychological problems from which elderly suffer from are memory impairments, sleeplessness, fear, anxiety, social adjustment, insecurity etc., the important psychological illness from which elders suffers. 66.7% of respondents suffers from problem of anxiety, 12.9% of respondents suffers from stress, 4.6% suffers from low self – esteem and 15.4% of respondents suffers from adjustment problem. Psychological well-being is considered as an important factor for the institutionalised elders in the modern lifestyle.

**Suggestion:**

Here, some of the suggestion to improve the psycho-social well- being in modern nuclear family system:

1. Development of geriatric counselling centres in old age homes and day care centres with professional counsellors.
2. Joint efforts by government in providing social welfare programme.
3. Planned retirement benefits.
4. Social security programmes for families in providing the social needs of the elders.
5. **Yoga, meditation and spiritual practices results positive and contented state of mind and make pain free body and improve well-being.**
6. **Practices of yoga and pranayamas improve sense of balance between the physical (body) and psychological (mind) aspects of elders to great extent.**
7. **Development of play therapy and art therapy.**

**Social Work Intervention:**

Social work profession is a helping profession in solving the various problems for different age group old age is such as Gerontological social work is a profession which dealing with the problems of elders. Methods and approaches of social work such as case work, group work, community origination and social work research is helpful in solving the various problems of the elders in the modern phenomenon. Social worker can act as case workers, group workers, community organizers, counselors, experts, and mediators in institutional setting.

**Conclusion:**

Thus, institutionalised elders suffers from various psycho-social problem among depression is most common psychological illness from which elders suffers. Various factors affects the depression such as lack of family care and support, health problem, lack of entertainment, lack of counselling results depression among institutionalised elders. Family care, love and affection from family members, different approaches, methods, therapy, up brining of welfare measures and social work intervention is considered useful to improve the care of elders by family members because family care is best care for promoting psycho-social well-being at end of life span.

**References:**

1. *Dr. Krishna Chandra Choudhary (2014) Critical Elderly: A Psycho-Behaviour Prospective, Social Welfare Journal, by Central social Welfare Board, New Delhi.*
2. [www.geronlogicalsocialwork.com](http://www.geronlogicalsocialwork.com)
3. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elderly\\_care.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elderly_care)
4. [www.geronlogicalsocialwork.com](http://www.geronlogicalsocialwork.com)