

Chapter 7

Management Strategies for Advancing Rural Elderly Well-Being: A Holistic Approach to Enhance Quality of Life

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of population aging is a global challenge, and India is no exception, with projections indicating a significant increase in the elderly population by 2050. Rural locations have limited healthcare and social services, which presents distinct issues. Drawing from empirical evidence and theoretical perspectives, the chapter outlines key issues faced by the elderly. It explores psychosocial and biological theories of aging to comprehend the complexity of aging and its effects on psychological well-being and quality of life. This chapter discusses options to improve rural elderly well-being and quality of life through holistic intervention management strategies, including community engagement, capacity building, access to healthcare services, promotion of healthy lifestyles, and psycho-education and behavioral interventions. These strategies can effectively address the diverse needs of the elderly, ensuring they age with dignity and independence.

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3693-8552-4.ch007

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INTRODUCTION

Globally, population aging denotes an increasing proportion of older adults. According to a 2019 forecast by the United Nations, the global population of those aged 65 and above is projected to increase from 703 million to 1.5 billion by the year 2050 (United Nations, 2020). The transition is propelled by progress in health-care, decreasing fertility rates, and enhanced living conditions, resulting in a rise in life expectancy. This phenomenon entails both prospects and obstacles, such as a diminishing labor force and a heightened need for healthcare and social care (Beard & Bloom 2015). The issues posed by demographic shifts include the requirement for age-friendly surroundings, robust pension systems, and sufficient healthcare services in order to accommodate the aging population. To tackle the difficulties presented by aging populations, governments need to give top priority to reducing budget deficits while also guaranteeing the provision of healthcare and pensions. This endeavor has substantial cost consequences (Harper, 2014). The process of aging is a multifaceted and prevalent occurrence that is impacted by variations among individuals, the presence of social assistance, and cultural elements (Clarfield, 2022).

Demography

India, with its vast population, is also affected by these tendencies. The India Ageing Report 2023 forecasts that by 2050, 20% of the population would be aged 60 and beyond, and by the end of the century, this figure will increase to 36%. The demographic shift poses a particular challenge in rural India, where 70% of the populace resides. As fecundity and migration decrease, families will shrink, straining conventional family support systems (Dommaraju, 2015). The UN Population Division (1996) predicts 337 million rural elderly in Asia by 2025. According to the 2001 statistics dimension of older adults, 80% of Indians over 60 reside in rural settings. As stated in Table 1, rural areas had 7.22 percent of the elderly vs 5.22 in cities. Rural old have steadily expanded over the last 20 years, with four-fifths of Indian elderly living in rural areas and 30% reporting their presence. 134.9 million homes are elderly-free (Rural 94 million + Urban 40.8 million). These projections highlight the need for comprehensive research and effective policy to address the specific challenges of India's elderly population by 2050.

Table 1. Percentage share of older population in total population

Source	Persons	Female	Male	Rural	Urban
Census 1991	5.6	5.8	5.5	5.8	4.7

continued on following page

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