



AWARENESS LEVELS OF ELDERLY RESPONDENTS ON VARIOUS GOVERNMENTAL SCHEMES AND PROGRAMME IN BOTH RURAL AND URBAN AREAS

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Abstract

Dementia is associated with various mental and behavioural symptoms which affects both the patient and their care-givers. However, often, the quality of life of older persons is affected by the situations around them e.g. concerns regarding the availability of appropriate care, expectations from family, changing family systems and traditional values, safety in the community, and environment issues. Health related concerns, loneliness, boredom, abuse from family members, bereavements, financial worries are many concerns that the elderly face. The older people report discomfort in adjusting to the changes in societal attitude and behaviour especially from younger generations. According to this background, the government has been implementing various schemes and programmes for well being of the elderly in both rural and urban areas. Hence, the present study focus on awareness levels of elderly on various schemes in Anantapuramu district rural and urban areas.

Key Words: *Awareness, National Policies, Health Policies, Etc.*

Introduction

The increasing life expectancy resulting from medical and technological advancements, coupled with declining fertility rates has led to a significant increase in the number of older individuals worldwide. According to the latest population projection by World Population Prospects 2022, the proportion of individuals aged 65 and over is projected to rise from 10% to 2022 to 16% in 2050. However, living longer does not necessarily mean better health. Ageing has been associated with declining physical and cognitive functions and an increased risk of non-communicable diseases, which can lead to challenges in public health and healthcare resources. Ageing pathways vary from person to person due to differences in genetic profiles and life course health exposures. It is therefore crucial to identify lifestyle behaviours that are associated with ageing.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines healthy ageing as “the process of developing and maintaining the functional ability that enables wellbeing in old age”. Functional ability refers to people’s ability to meet their basic needs, learn, grow and make decisions, be mobile, build and maintain relationships, and contribute to society. Intrinsic capacity varies among individuals based on their genetic inheritance, physical and mental proficiency, and specific living and interacting environments. These environments can change over time depending on political, economic, social norms, values, and resources. The interaction between intrinsic capacity and environmental characteristics determines functional ability.

As individuals age, they lose functional abilities due to declining health and an increased risk of non-communicable diseases. Apart from that, exposure to different lifestyle behaviours might also affect health outcomes. Age-related diseases could be delayed by adopting a healthy lifestyle. Regular engagement in physical activity and refraining from smoking can delay the ageing process.



Significance of the study

A wide range of abuse such as physical, verbal, economic, disrespect, neglect has been observed in the Indian elderly population. The abuse of elders is very common in India, and unfortunately, it is the children, mostly sons, who are the wrongdoers. Although many elderly people are experiencing various types of abuse and financial exploitation at home; they do not come out and seek help regarding this, in spite of the existence of specific laws in the country. In addition, many older people may not be aware of such laws; therefore efforts should be taken for improving awareness in the community and ease of utilisation of such laws. There are many laws protecting the rights of the elderly in India; however their implementation and use are seriously flawed. It has been observed that those with formal education (8 years or above) among the elderly is associated with reduced violence against them. This paper exhibit that the awareness levels of the sample respondents in the study area.

Objectives of the present study

The specific objectives of the study are as follows

1. To the concept of welfare programmes especially for elderly
2. To analyse the level of awareness on various schemes
3. To draw the conclusions

Methodology

Sampling design

The present study is depending on empirical analysis. Anantapuramu district is very drought prone area and majority of the population depending on agriculture and allied sector. For taken up present study – 400 (200 from urban areas and 200 from rural areas) sample elderly people was selected by using simple random techniques. And it covers Anantapuramu and surrounding mandal namely Raphadu, Bukkarayasamudram, Garladinne, Anantapuramu rural, and Atmakur.

Data collection

The present study is based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected from the selected sample elderly respondents through using a structure interview schedule after pre-tested (pilot study). And secondary data was also collected from various sources like dailies, journals, books, theses, dissertations, websites, and various universities libraries.

Table 1
Awareness levels of Elderly people on National Initiatives scheme (2000)

S.No	Awareness level	Rural	Urban	Total
1	Well aware	51 (25.50)	79 (39.50)	130 (32.50)
2	Moderately	48 (24.00)	102 (51.00)	150 (37.50)
3	Not aware	101 (50.50)	19 (09.50)	120 (30.00)
	Total	200 (100)	200 (100)	400 (100)

Source: Field Survey



Chi-square Value : 81.5041.
P-value : < 0.00001.
At Significant : $p < .05$.

The above table demonstrated that the awareness levels of elderly people on National initiatives scheme which is incorporated in 2000 by the central government in India as well as Anantapuramu district of Andhra Pradesh. It can be found that the researcher has collected primary information regarding the satisfaction levels on central government schemes in both rural and urban elderly people in the study area. It is reported that 25.50 per cent of the rural sample respondents and 39.50 per cent of the urban elderly have well aware about that scheme, 24 per cent of the rural respondents and 51 per cent of the sample older people have stated that they have moderate aware and 50 per cent and 9.50 per cent of the urban areas elderly people have not aware about the scheme in the study area. An overall awareness levels of total respondents (both rural and urban) were found that 32.50 per cent of the respondents have well aware and 37.50 per cent of the respondents have moderate aware, and 30 per cent of the respondents have not aware in the study area.

Table 2
Awareness levels on National Programme for Health Care for
The Elderly (NPHCE) in the study area

S.No	Awareness level	Rural	Urban	Total
1	Well aware	41 (20.50)	89 (44.50)	130 (32.50)
2	Moderately	31 (15.50)	76 (38.00)	107 (26.75)
3	Not aware	128 (64.00)	35 (17.50)	163 (40.75)
	Total	200 (100)	200 (100)	400 (100)

Source :Field Survey

Chi-square Value : 89.7097.
P-value : < 0.00001.
At Significant : $p < .05$.

Generally, the elderly people have been suffering various health problems in any society. So, the central government has been incorporating health care facilities/schemes/programmes in India. According to this direction, the researcher has raised statement like “tender your satisfaction lelve on national Programme for Health Care for the Elderly (NPHCE)” in the study area. It is noticed that – 20.50 per cent of the rural respondents have well aware about that programme, 15.50 per cent of the select respondents have moderately, and 64 per cent of the respondents have not aware in rural areas. While urban area respondents, 44.50 per cent of the respondents have stated that they have well aware, 38 per cent of them noticed that they have moderate aware, and 17 per cent of the respondents have expressed that there is no idea/aware about said scheme in urban area. It can be concluded from the table that majority of the rural elderly people do not aware about that programme and urban area elderly people have much aware in the selected area.



Table 3
Awareness on income tax exemption for senior citizens

S.No	Awareness level	Rural	Urban	Total
1	Well aware	12 (06.00)	51 (25.50)	63 (15.75)
2	Moderately	26 (13.00)	98 (49.00)	124 (31.00)
3	Not aware	162 (81.00)	51 (25.50)	213 (53.25)
	Total	200 (100)	200 (100)	400 (100)

Source: Field Survey

Chi-square Value : 123.7944.
P-value : < 0.00001.
At Significant : $p < .05$.

The table exhibited that the awareness levels on income tax exemption for senior citizens in Indian society. The government has been implementing various welfare programmes to the elderly people for wellbeing. Among that, income tax exemption is of the major benefit to the who have been getting pensions, business, and other sources. According to this backdrop, the researcher has collected information relating particular area. It is quite interestingly found that 6 per cent represents 12 respondents have well aware about tax exemption for senior citizens, 13 per cent which are reported as 26 sample rural elderly people have moderate knowledge and majority of the respondents do not ware about that and it is represents that 81 per cent (162 rural respondents). In case of urban elderly people, 25.50 per cent of the respondents have well aware about tax exemption to the senior citizens and not aware and half of the per cent of the respondents have stated that they have aware moderately in the study area.

Table 4
Awareness about highest interest rate provided to elderly people
Through postal scheme

S.No	Awareness level	Rural	Urban	Total
1	Well aware	89 (44.50)	120 (60.00)	209 (52.25)
2	Moderately	96 (48.00)	78 (39.00)	174 (43.50)
3	Not aware	15 (07.50)	02 (01.00)	17 (04.25)
	Total	200 (100)	200 (100)	400 (100)

Source: Field Survey



Chi-square Value : 16.4013.
P-value : < 0.00001.
At Significant : $p < .05$.

The table found that the awareness about highest interest rate provided to the elderly people by the post department schemes in Indian society. It is noticed that majority of the rural people have been saving/investing in postal department schemes because of nearest and highly convenient to saving and quantity of amount. Hence, first they have been preferring to the post department schemes especially by the senior citizens in the study area. It is further noticed that 44.50 per cent of the respondents have stated that they have well aware about various schemes which are implemented by the postal department especially for senior citizens and paying highest interest rate on the schemes, 48 per cent of the rural respondents have moderately aware, and only 7.50 per cent of them do not aware about that scheme. It is surprisingly found that morethan half of the respondents have stated that they have well aware about that and 39 per cent of the respondents have moderately aware.

The table concluded that majority of the respondents have well aware about postal schemes have paid highest interest rates for senior citizens investment in both rural and area respondents in Anantapuramu district of Andhra Pradesh.

Table 5
Awareness about travelling concessions for senior citizens in both Railways, RTC and Airways (domestic)

S.No	Awareness level	Rural	Urban	Total
1	Well aware	159 (79.50)	182 (94.50)	341 (85.25)
2	Moderately	39 (19.50)	18 (09.00)	57 (14.25)
3	Not aware	02 (01.00)	00 (00)	02 (00.50)
	Total	200 (100)	200 (100)	400 (100)

Source :Field Survey

Chi-square Value : 10.5275.
P-value : < 0.00001.
At Significant : $p < .05$.

The Central and State government have been more focusing on elderly people while travel through Railways, Road Transportation and Airway (domestic only) for well being of them. In this context, the researcher has raised a question to the elderly people and collected their opinion on levels of awareness about those concessions schemes in Anantapuramu district of Andhra Pradesh. The table quantitative data discloses that the awareness levels on travelling concessions for senior citizens in both Railways, RTC and Airways in both rural and urban area old age people in Anantapuramu district of Andhra Pradesh.



It is quite interestingly found that 79.50 per cent represents 159 sample old age people have stated that they have well aware about that policy, 19.50 per cent of the respondents have stated that they have moderate aware and only one per cent of the respondents have stated no idea/aware about that scheme by the rural selected sample respondents in the study area. It is further exhibited that even urban area respondents also disclose their opinion/level of awareness on the same scheme and found that 94 per cent of the respondents were expressed that positive opinion and rest of them also having moderate knowledge regarding that scheme in Anantapuramu district.

Conclusion

As is well-known, in India social security is on the concurrent list as per its Constitution, but in our judgment the Union government should take primary responsibility for putting in place a comprehensive social security framework. The reason for such a view is that given the nature of fiscal federalism in place, the Union government has been enjoying much wider authority fiscal space in terms of augmenting resources compared to the states of the Indian Union. Hence, it is high time to go for comprehensive social security schemes in place with appropriate institutional mechanism. As is evident from our discussion in the foregoing, India's experience on the whole has been disappointing with reference to addressing the social security needs of the elderly. There have been hesitant and limited sporadic efforts, instead of a coherent policy approach of any significant.

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