



PARENTAL EXPECTATION ON RECIPROCITY FROM GROWN CHILDREN DURING OLD AGE: A STUDY AMONG FEMALE ELDERLY IN ANATHAPURAM DISTRICT OF ANDHRA PRADESH".

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Abstract

In old age parents wish to have positive ties with their children. They place high value on reciprocity of their children. They view their children as friends and continue to be interested in their activities and welfare. There are no clear cut rules for how older parents and their adult children should reciprocate with each other and it depends on the inter-relationship between them. Parents put their whole efforts to take care of their children especially on nutrition, health care, education and employment and expect their children reciprocate same kind of responsibility when they become old. Parental perceptions on children's support during old age differ from individual to individual depending upon their confidence level and nature of relationship. Some parents feel that children support is fully necessary in day to day activities and some others don't feel. Some elderly parents adopt gerontocracy and expect their children to follow without any resistance. Even though it is not common among all families, gerontocracy is being accepted by certain families especially in rural areas even today. In the present paper focus was aimed at understanding the general expectations of elderly parents from children under the concept of reciprocity.

Key Words: Reciprocity (Behaviour in which two people or groups of people give each other help And advantages), Gerontocracy (Family ruled by elders), Feminisation (Females out number males after 70 years of age), Predicament (Difficulty/Plight).

Introduction

By 2050, women over 60 years would exceed the number of elderly men by 18.4 million, which would result in a unique characteristic of 'feminisation' of the elderly population in India as is being experienced in many provinces of China. In fact, the two most populous nations will together contribute to 38 per cent of the global elderly population.

The predicament of elderly women is aggravated by a life time of gender-based discrimination. The gendered nature of ageing is such that universally, women tend to live longer than men. In the advanced age of 80 years and above, widowhood dominates the status of women with 71 per cent of women and only 29 per cent of men having lost their spouse. Social mores inhibit women from re-marrying; resulting in an increased likelihood of women ending up alone. In this paper an attempt was made to understand the expectation level of elderly women on their grown children.

When the 2011 census figures are observed the general sex ratio favours the male population (940 females per 1,000males). If we observe this for people above 60 years, it favours elderly women (1022:1000). In the further analysis it can be noticed that at the ages of 70, 75 & 80 there are 1,590, 1,758 & 1,980 elderly women respectively per 1,000 elderly men. These figures show clearly the emergence of concept of feminization of elderly.

Innumerable reasons add up to make ageing women in India one of the most vulnerable segments of the population. Their social and health security can no longer be compromised. In a country of ageing women, India must step up to the challenge to offer more than just the solace of promises.

Method and area of the study

Ananthapuram district in Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh is selected for the study because the number of elderly females above 70 years is more compare to other areas. Three mandals viz., Tadipathri, Dharmavaram and Kanaganipalli were considered for this study where female elderly more in number.

The female elderly above 60 years of age are the sample for the present study. The sample distribution from three mandal areas was as follows.

Table 1: Selected mandals from Ananthapuram districts

Name of the mandal	Name of the villages			Total
Tadipathri	Vennapusa palli Samples:25	Thimmam palli Samples:25	Juturu Samples:20	70
Dharmavaram	Kamireddy palle Samples:25	Ravula cheruvu Samples:25	Garisenapalle samples:20	70
Kanagani palle	ThagarakuntaSamples:20	PalepalemSamples:20	YelukuntlaSamples:20	60
	Total			200



As shown in the table, the total number of sample of 200 elderly women from Ananthapuram district were considered for the study. The personal interview by the researcher was the technique used for data collection.

Reciprocal expectations of elderly females from grown children:

The life of a widow is riddled with stringent moral codes, with integral rights relinquished and liberties circumvented. Social bias often results in unjust allocation of resources, neglect, abuse, and exploitation, and gender-based violence, lack of access to basic services and prevention of ownership of assets. Ageing women are more likely to get excluded from social security schemes due to lower literacy and awareness levels.

Under these circumstances, female elderly expect much from their grown sons to assist them. The general expectations on children support and how far the elderly need them is assessed in the study based on fifteen related aspects as shown in the table.

The Reciprocal expectation of female elderly on children's help during old age has been elicited and presented in the Table 2.

Table 2: Reciprocal expectation of female elderly on children's help during old age

S. NO	Expectations		Not necessary	To some extent necessary	Fully Necessary	Total
1	Depending on children's support during old age	N	19	36	145	200
		%	9.5	18	72.5	100
2	Willingness of sons to live with parents after marriage	N	27	49	124	200
		%	13.5	24.5	62	100
3	Cordial and supportive relationship by daughter-in-laws	N	29	20	151	200
		%	14.5	10	75.5	100
4	Children giving share in their earnings to old age parents	N	57	121	22	200
		%	28.5	60.5	11	100
5	Children's care during illness	N	6	34	160	200
		%	3	17	80	100
6	Son's responsibility of household maintenance	N	31	85	84	200
		%	15.5	42.5	42	100
7	Children's support for recreation and entertainment	N	89	59	52	200
		%	44.5	29.5	26	100
8	Son's sharing responsibility of daughter's marriage	N	14	81	105	200
		%	07	40.5	52.5	100
9	Allowing grand children to give company to elderly	N	51	108	41	200
		%	25.5	54	20.5	100
10	Allowing grand children to sleep with elderly parents	N	11	25	164	200
		%	5.5	12.5	82	100
11	Support to daughters after marriage	N	11	29	160	200
		%	5.5	14.5	80	100
12	Regular invitation to married daughters to attend family festivals and offer gifts	N	15	27	158	200
		%	7.5	13.5	79	100
13	Elderly parents involvement in selection of Bride and Bridegroom	N	29	31	140	200
		%	14.5	15.5	70	100
14	Children has to seek advice of elderly parents on decisions regard business/employment/agriculture	N	34	29	137	200
		%	17	14.5	68.5	100
15	Gerontocracy has to be allowed without resistance	N	40	90	70	200
		%	20	45	35	100

1. Depending on children's support during old age

Generally parents expect to have support from children during old age and some others do not feel. In the study area, almost three fourths (72.5 %) of the elderly felt that children's support is 'fully necessary' during old age. However, 18 % felt that they 'need it occasionally' and the remaining 9.5 % felt that children's support is 'not at all necessary'.



2. Willingness of sons to live with parents after marriage

Obviously nearly about 62 % of the elderly had strong perception that their married children should live along with them during old age. Around 24.5 % felt that it is to some extent 'necessary' and the only remaining 13.5 % felt as it is 'not necessary' for children to live with them.

3. Cordial and supportive relationship by daughters-in-law

Usually elderly people especially female elderly expect their daughters in law to be obliged and supportive in day to day activities. In the present study also around three fourths (75.5 %) of the respondents felt it as 'fully necessary', In contrast to 14.5% who felt 'not necessary'. The remaining 10% felt it as 'to some extent necessary'.

4. Children giving share in their earnings to old age parents

Regarding children providing share of their earnings to elderly parents, nearly 61 % expect it as "to some extent necessary" and in contrast only 11% expect as "fully necessary". The remaining 28.5 % felt it as "not necessary".

5. Children's care during illness

Generally old age people have lot of expectations on their children to take care of them during illness. In the present study also an overwhelming proportion of elderly females (80%) felt it as 'fully necessary', while 17% felt it as 'to some extent necessary' and only 3% felt it as 'not necessary'. This explains the difficult situation of female elderly, who has to must depend upon children for care during illness.

6. Sons responsibility of house hold maintenance

The majority of the female elderly (42.5%) 'to some extent' felt necessary regarding sons taking responsibility of house hold maintenance and 42 % opined that it is 'fully necessary'. The other 15.5% stated that it is 'not necessary' for sons to take this responsibility.

7. Children's support for recreation and entertainment

Generally parents get psychological strength and mental happiness when they play with children. In the study area majority of the respondents (44.5%) felt that the provision of recreation and entertainment by children at home is 'not necessary' and only 26% opined it as 'fully necessary'. The remaining 29.5% perceived that the provision of recreation acts by children at home as 'to some extent necessary'. Grand children spending much time at school and coming late in the evening to the house is not allowing them to play with elderly. Further television channels have become a source of entertainment to elderly.

8. Son's sharing responsibility of daughter's marriage

Nearly more than half of the respondents (52.5%) opined that their sons sharing responsibility of daughters marriage is 'fully necessary' and another 40.5% felt it is 'to some extent necessary'. Only 7% opined that it is 'not necessary'.

9. Allowing grand children to give company to elderly

Elderly will be more willing to associate with grand children which provide them mental happiness and peace. In the study area more than half of the elderly (54%) felt that the company of grand children is 'to some extent necessary' and only 20.5% of respondents felt it is 'fully necessary'. The remaining 25.5% opined that it is 'not necessary'. This may be because the non availability of children at home for much time.

10. Allowing grand children to sleep with elderly parents

Generally elderly people especially female elderly have sentimental attachment with grand children and expect to sleep along with them. In the study area also an overwhelming proportion (82%) felt it as 'fully necessary', the remaining 12.5% opined it as 'to some extent necessary' and the other 5.5% felt it as 'not necessary'.

11. Support to daughters after marriage

In Indian context the elderly people especially female elderly have strong ambition that their daughters have to be supported even after marriage, if they are in critical stage. In this direction they put lot of pressure on sons to help the married daughters. It is found to be true in the present study also as more than three fourths (80%) felt it as 'fully necessary'. Another 14.5% opined it as 'to some extent necessary' and the remaining only 5.5% felt it as 'not necessary'.

12. Regular invitation to married daughters to attend family festivals and offer gifts

The female elderly have strong motive that their married daughters have to be regularly invited to family functions, festivals and offer gifts to them. It was found true in the study area also as more than three fourths (79%) felt it as 'fully necessary', another 13.5% felt it as 'to some extent necessary' and remaining only 7.5% felt it as 'not necessary'.



13. Elderly parents involvement in selection of Bride and Bridegroom

Elderly parents generally have strong feeling that they have to be involved in selection of bride and bridegroom to their children. In the study area also this feeling was represented by 70% of elderly as ‘fully necessary’ followed by 15.5% as ‘to some extent necessary’ and the remaining only 14.5% felt as ‘not necessary’.

14. Children has to seek advice of elderly parents on decisions regard- business/ Employment / agriculture

Generally elderly people expect their children to seek their advice on decisions related to business/employment/agriculture. It is found to be true among majority in the present study also, as 68.5% felt it as ‘fully necessary’. Another 14.5% felt it as ‘to some extent necessary’ and the remaining 17% felt it as ‘not necessary’.

15. Gerontocracy has to be allowed without any resistance

In some families the elderly persons strongly feel to rule over the family intending to control every domestic aspect. Further they strongly believe that other family members should obey their decisions without any resistance. In the present study this feeling was felt as ‘fully necessary’ by 35% of respondents. Another 45% has this feeling ‘to some extent necessary’. The remaining 20% didn’t agreed on this and felt it as ‘not necessary’.

Index on Parental Expectation on Children’s Support during Old Age

The nature and the level of expectations of elderly parents from their children vary from individual to individual depending upon their socio-economic background. Some parents feel that the support from children is fully necessary, some fell as to somewhat necessary and others feel it as not necessary. Usually, the parent’s expectations will not be limited to one or two aspects and generally they need help on 15 aspects as mentioned in the above table. If one has to understand the nature and the level of expectancy, it has to be derived from all related aspects on a cumulative manner. The best way to determine the level of expectation range is the preparation of index based on individual responses to all 15 related as together.

In this direction an index on level of expectations of female elderly on children support during old age for developing index the response of female elderly on 15 related aspects was considered.

The score range for each individual on all 15 related aspects lie in between 15-45. Based on individual scores respondents were grouped into three categories as follows.

Table 3: Category of Respondents Based On Group Index

S.NO	SCORE RANGE	NATURE OF EXPECTATIONS
1	25 & LESS	Not Necessary
2	26-35	To Some Extent Necessary
3	36 +	Fully Necessary

Table 4: Index Table on Parental Expectation on Reciprocity from Adult Children during Old Age

Parental Expectation On Reciprocity From Adult Children During Old Age	Not Necessary	To Some Extent Necessary	Fully Necessary	Total
	30.9	54.9	114.2	200
	15.44 %	27.45%	57.11%	100%

In this study obviously majority of elderly females opined that, children’s support is either “fully necessary” or “to some extent necessary”. More than half (57 %) felt that children’s support is “fully necessary” and another 27.5% expressed it as “to some extent necessary”. The remaining only 15.5% felt as they can live independently without support of children.

Conclusion

Since the study area is predominantly rural, the expectations of fully dependency on children were seen among more than half of the respondents. This is an alarming situation for the state and central governments to mull on different strategies and policies to take care of the growing female elderly Women.

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