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Aging and Old Age Homes: A Case Study of Structural Changes in Family Institution

Afshan Kanwal¹, Dr. Aamir Hayat², Dr. Madieha Akram^{3*}, Mehvish Shafiq⁴, Dr. Sadia Bashir⁵

¹ M.Phil. Scholar, School of Sociology, Minhaj University Lahore, Email: Afshankanwal13@gmail.com

² Assistant Professor, School of Sociology, Minhaj University Lahore, Email: Draamir.soc@mul.edu.pk

³ *Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, The Women University Multan, Email: Dr.madieha@gmail.com

⁴ Lecturer, Department of Applied Psychology, The Women University Multan, Email: mehvishshafiq@gmail.com

⁵ Lecturer, Department of Botany, The Women University Multan, Email: Sadia.6026@wum.edu.pk

***Corresponding Author:** Dr. Madieha Akram

*Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, The Women University Multan, Email: Dr.madieha@gmail.com

Background: The aim of the research study was to explore those pushing factors that were being influence on the family institution and become the cause of transition of the senior citizens from family to old age homes.

Methodology: Research approach was used for this research that is qualitative and research design is descriptive. The targeted population was the senior citizens that were living in old age homes. The respondents were selected by purposive sampling technique and the sample size was consisted of 30 senior citizens of the selected two old age homes at district Lahore. The in- depth interviews were conducted for data collection with the help of interview guide. The key informant interviews were conducted to the management of the old age homes. Qualitative data was analyzed through thematic analysis.

Conclusion: The present study analyzed that Structural –functional changes in family institution are the key factor that becomes the cause of transition of the senior citizens to old age homes. Aging is the most prominent factor which is associated with economic status of the senior citizens. It was concluded that they linked the socio-economic status with the age factor and mostly linked their economic status to a significant factor which led to disorganization in the family institution.

Key words: Family Institution, Aging , Senior Citizens, Old Age Home

Introduction

The term 'family' is derived from the Roman word 'Famulus' which means servant. In Roman law the family word refers to a group of producers and slaves and servants and the member of the same descent and marriage. The family is a small group that includes fathers, mothers and their children who are connected to each other through marriage, blood or adoption. The family is a unique social institution with no substitute and the basic unit of social organization. The family is the center of all social structures and it is still the strongest association and institution of human society. No society or civilization can ever exist without a family. It also plays an important role in the development and socialization of an individual's personality (Mondal 2012). Pakistan has strong cultural heritage that has been part of the lifestyle of its people for centuries. The value of a strong family system has played an important role in influencing an individual's lifestyle, social character, profession and decision making. The elderly are the central light in a traditional Asian family, where they are treated with respect and have an authoritative position. They are considered the primary source of guidance. In return they receive care and support from family members. In recent times changes have been noticed in our family system, which has led to a number of factors affecting the structure and function of the families (Itrat, Taqui, Qazi & Qidwai, 2007). The push factor is a factor that motivates a person to move away from their country or area of residence. Push factors are often used with a negative connotation, as they often consist of problems, disturbing situations, political or economic failures (Safeopedia 2021). A person's aging depends on a number of factors that affect the quality of life, such as physical, social, psychological, economic, environmental and cultural factors that in turn affect the quality of life (Prakash, Bullappa & Kumar, 2019). Socio-cultural factors are the larger scale forces within cultures and societies that affect the feelings, thoughts and behaviors. Social factors are those things that affect someone's lifestyle. These could include wealth, religion, education level, family size and structure and population density (Betts 2016). Change in the family structure and shifts in inter- generational relations have brought into focus many issues (Kumar, Udyar, Arun & Sai, 2016).

Age Classification

The human age can be classified into four categories, the first category is as Child (0-12 years), second category is Adolescence (13-18 years), third category is Adult (19-59 years) and forth category is Senior Adult (60 years and above) (Nithyashri & Kulanthaivel 2012). In 2015, The World Health Organization, under the auspices of the United Nations, formally reviewed the age standards. A person is now considered young before the age of 44. According to the new classification of age, the younger age group is 25 to 44 years, the middle age is 44-60 years, the old age is 60-75 years, and the old age is 75-90 years and the longevity age after 90 years (Dyussenbayev 2017).

Perspectives of Ageing

The ageing process can be divided into 3 major perspectives that are biological ageing, Sociological ageing and psychological ageing.

Biological Ageing: it is associated with decline the proper functioning of the vital organs of the body. It is not all people experience decreased organ function in the same proportion. Some people have healthier hearts at the age of 80 than others do at the age of 60.

Sociological Ageing: it is associated with how a person relates with others in the society. Interaction and attitude within the community are used to assess a person's aging and maturation. As a person ages socially, he/she calculates his/her utterances, limits the use of abusive language, trim relationship to mature friends, changes mode of dressing. As a person ages socially, they tend to be guided by the norms of the society to which the person belongs.

Psychological Ageing: psychological ageing include self-identity, feelings, memory, motivation, emotions, experience. Psychological ageing is heterogeneous and continuous as an individual passes through life (Onyenemezu & Olumati 2013).

Historical Perspective of Ageing

In throughout history elders have been valued for wisdom and experiences. In pre-industrial or agrarian societies families were inter-generational and members were dependent on each other for survival and support. Elders were less valued in industrial societies; in the United States during 20th century family members were less dependent on each other for support, as a result of industrialization family become more independent and leaving elders to manage themselves, in 1964 President Johnson launched the war on poverty which was fought for the opportunities, social services and development of rights for all poor Americans. In 1965 Older American Act was passed into legislation particularly address the rights and needs of older adults (Brossoie & Chop 2018).

Origin of Old Age Home

Old age home is a Western concept. Earlier, the old age home was known as Alms Houses. It was founded by King Athelstan in York and is the oldest St. Cross hospital in Winchester. The first organization in Madras to be started in 1840 was dedicated to the care of the elderly and was followed by the poor younger sisters of Calcutta in 1882. They opened a house that provided shelter, clothing and medical care to the elderly (Gupta 2016).

Early Non profitable Old Age Homes Established In 19th century almost every ethnic, religious, trade, profession and social groups were associated with Benevolent societies or fraternal organizations, there were hundreds of benevolent societies like German benevolent society , Irish benevolent society, Hebrew, Masons, Knights of Columbus all were called the voluntary organizations. Welfare /benevolent societies formed one of the earliest organized old age support programs. The members paid their monthly dues to the society when they were young and healthy, then they got help when they were old, weak or in need. Societies provided cash and food to help people in their homes. Since this was not enough for the elderly members who could no longer live alone, benevolent societies began to build "homes for the elderly" where their elderly could live. The major costs of constructing and maintaining these buildings were borne by the members of the Welfare Societies (Mahmood 2021).New laws were written in the 1800s to allow the creation of charitable organizations that could function as corporations. Many charitable societies were established by the will of the wealthy, which included the condition that money or property be used to help such people. Who meet certain criteria, such as deserving widows and desolate wives or people over the age of fifty, respectable character and old. To do their job, organizations created "old age homes" for people who could not live on their own houses (Hoyt 2021).Aifayat was the first old age home of Pakistan established in 1975 (Mahmood 2021).

Concept of Gerontology

Gerontology is the scientific study of aging that examines the biological, psychological, and social factors (bio – psycho- social) that are associated with aging and old age. Factors that affect how broad and diverse our age is: Biological factors include genetic background and physical health. Psychological effects include cognitive levels, mental health status, and general well-being. Sociological factors that from personal relationships to cultures, infrastructure and policies that organize society (Brossoie & Chop 2018).

Problems of Old Age Old age is a special stage of life characterized by various social, emotional, health, cognitive and financial changes. Most people consider old age to be a troubled stage of life, the problems of aging usually occurs after the age of 65.

Physical Problems Physical illness is one of the biggest problems experienced by the elderly. Deteriorating health can prevent a person from doing things that you enjoy or interfere with their normal activities. In addition, chronic illness in the elderly can limit or impair freedom, which is troubling for most people.

Cognitive Problems Mental disorders and cognitive decline are mostly associated with old age. Older people have personality and body language changes, mental depression, mood swings, aggression, memory lose and other mental health problems.

Emotional problems Lack of health and mental capacity makes the elderly needy. Lost independence can be a major source of tension. In addition, many older people face emotional challenges, such as feelings of loneliness and isolation. The death of loved one may add more stress, depression and anxiety that a person is already experiencing.

Social Problems Moving to retirement means a limited social life. In addition, the death of life partners, friends and relatives limit the person's participation in social life. Studies show that loneliness and fear of being cut off from social circles are some of the biggest fears that people have as they age (Sinykin 2021).

Problem Statement This study is based on the importance of family institution and various factors are effecting on the structure and function of this institution. The purpose of the study is to find out that transition or mobility of the senior members from one institution to another institution and their adjustment into new social group and social condition in the age of late 60s either acceptable or not. Senior citizens have played a significant role in the development of society during their productive years. They are the most important member of the family and respect of the senior citizens is the part of the Islamic religion and Pakistani cultural norms. In previous years, there was no concept of "old age homes" in Pakistani society. This is evident from the fact that in 2006 there were only three old age homes in Karachi but now the official number has increased to six (Qidwai *et al.*, 2018). There are six old age homes run by the government in Punjab. There are also 10 private old age homes. Approximately seven hundred senior citizens are living in old age homes run by the government and welfare organizations (Mahmood 2021).

The Managing Director of Bait-ul-Maal mentioned that 30 men and 4 women have been treated in their own homes, 1700 admission applications were pending in Edhi Old Age Home. The numbers of homeless elders are increasing and this worrying situation forced Bait-ul-Mal to set up the country's third largest house in Karachi after Lahore and Islamabad (Bhatti 2015). The number of elderly people in old age homes is increasing day by day due to various factors that are lack of family care, emotional support and financial problems. Socio-economic, demographic and structural challenges are also taking place within the family institution (Rajkumari & Shahani 2021).

Reason for the Selection of this topic

Every year especially on festivals like Eid, Fathers and Mother's Day, various media channels broadcast programs for the elderly who live in old age homes. The eye-popping moment was the pain and crying expressed by these elderly parents, when their children ignored and threw them into an old age homes when they needed help the most in the last years of their lives. There are various push factors behind the transition of the senior citizens from family to old age homes and the aim was to explore those pushing factors on micro level in the perspective of senior citizens who are living in old age homes at Lahore. This observation inspired me to work on my dissertation.

Sociology is the study of social groups and institutions, these social groups have been divided into different categories, the study of social groups is a major focus of many sociologists, as these groups explain how human behavior is shaped by collective life and how group life affects individuals. The two groups that social scientists primarily focus on are the primary and secondary groups, which are called "primary" because they are the primary

source of individual relationships and socialization and "secondary" because they are less important but still important to the individual. The bond of relationships in primary groups is made up of loyalty, love, care, concern and support. Secondary groups are functional groups created to achieve a goal (Crossman 2019).

The purpose of the study is to find out that transition or mobility of senior member from one group to another group and one institution to another institution and either family member may break the primary group characteristics and send their most senior members to secondary group. The secondary group may adopt the primary group characteristics that may need to the senior citizens and becoming the substitute of the family institution.

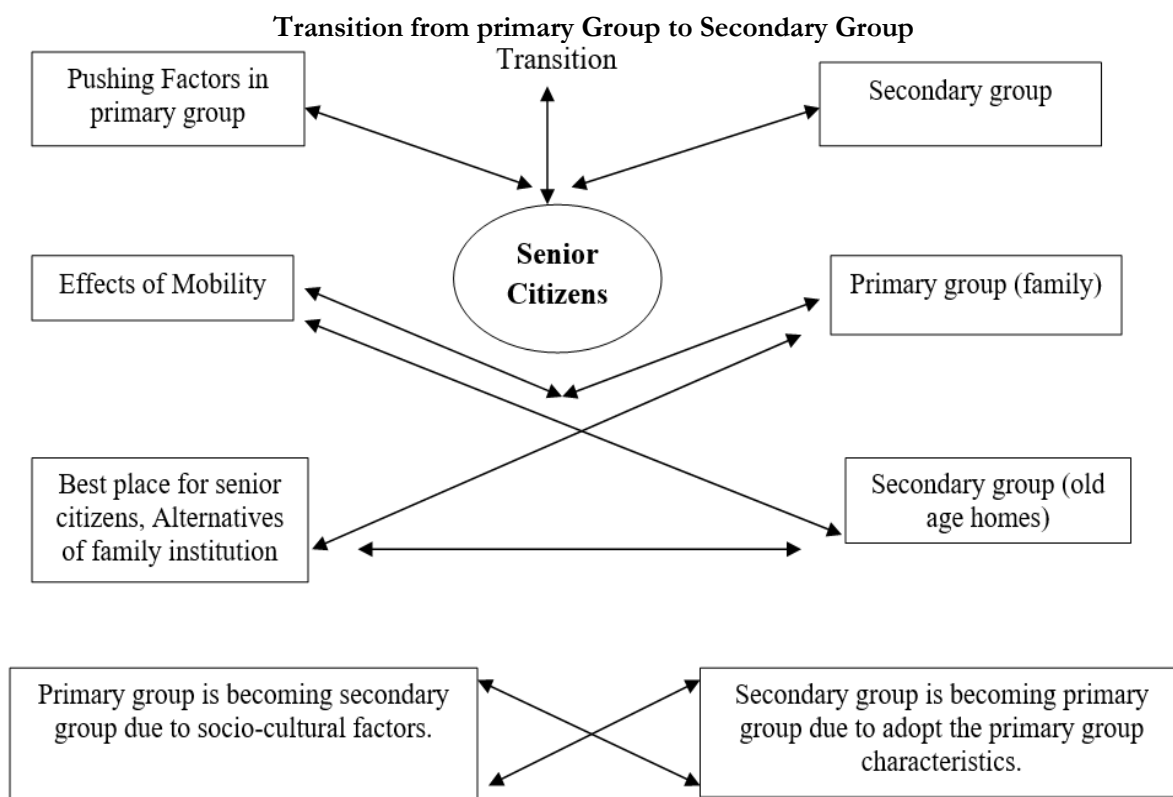
Theoretical Framework

Charles Horton Cooley was an American Sociologist originated the theory of Primary Group and Secondary Group, in the year of 1909 in the book of Social Organization. He categorized the group into primary, secondary and tertiary that was based on the degree of intimacy of contact (Surbhi 2021).

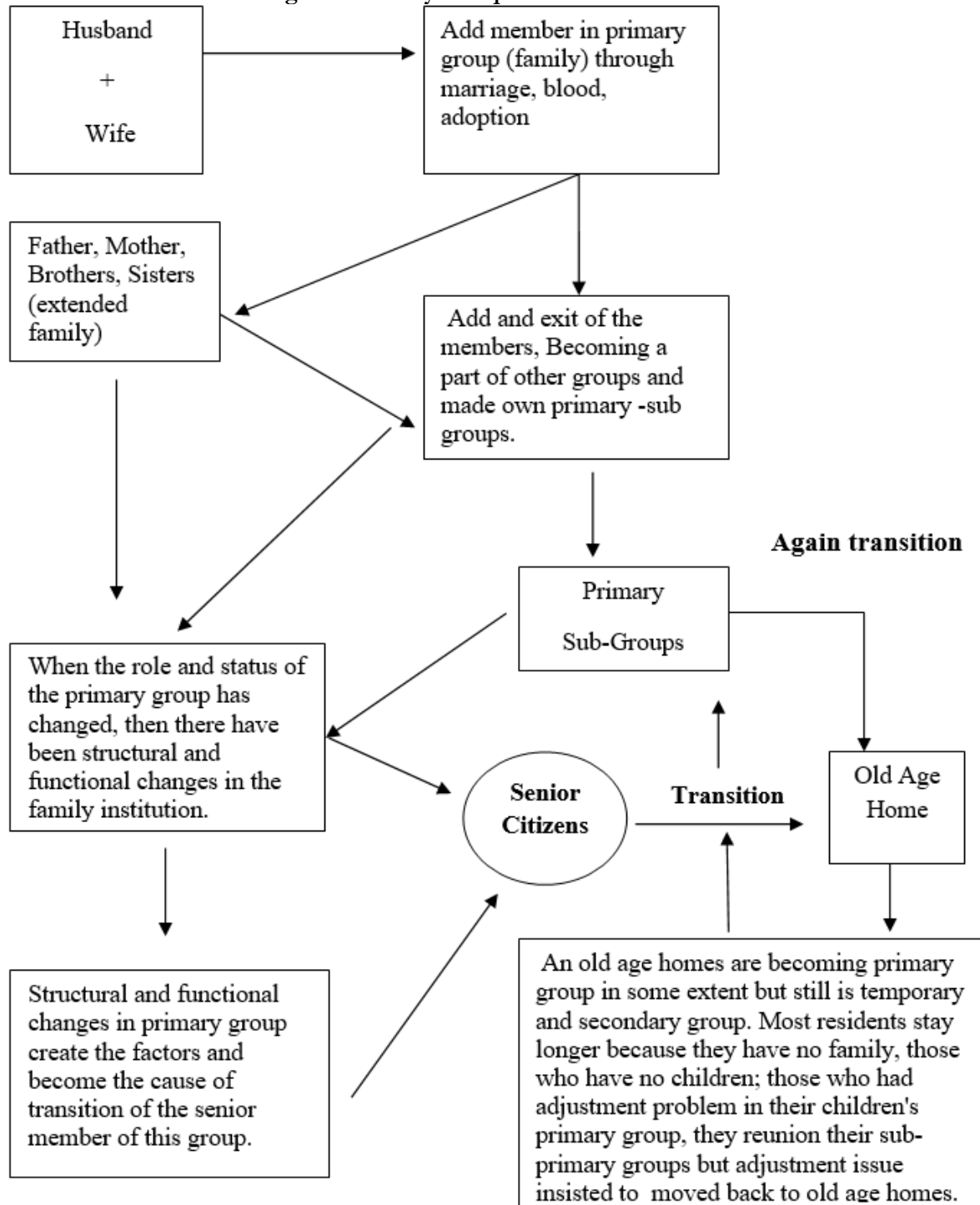
Types of Groups

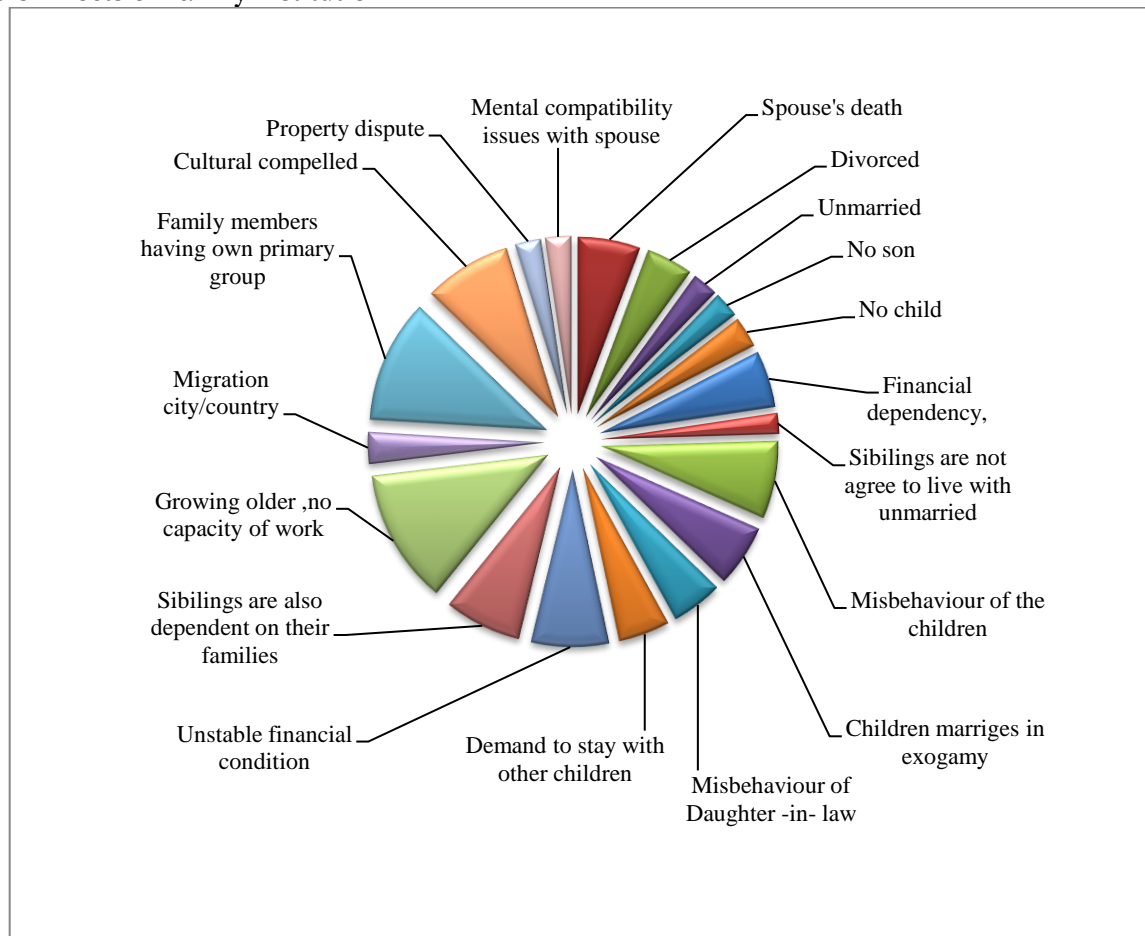
	Primary Group	Secondary Group
Characteristics	Primary Group	Secondary Group
Size	Small	Large
Type of relationship	Marriage, family, close friends.	Objective based relationships
Duration of relationship	Permanent ,long term	Temporary
Depth of relationship	Emotional ,deeper	Superficial ,impersonal
Stability of roles	Stable	Interchangeable

(Brown 2019).



Structural and Functional Changes in Primary Group



Factors Effects on family institution

This theory is well suited on the present study, family is the primary group and the old age home is the secondary group, above mentioned factors are effecting on the primary group (family) and the most senior member of this group transit to secondary group that is old age home. This study explored that how Secondary group is becoming better living place for senior citizens in the contrast of the primary group. The results of this study showed that effect of mobility on senior citizens from primary group to secondary group is satisfactory because they have shelter, food, care, medical facilities in secondary group (old age home). Primary group (family) has the some extent alternative in the shape of secondary group (old age home). Structural and functional changes in primary group forced the senior citizens to move another group. The intensity of the intimacy, deep emotions, long term, permanent, stable relationship is becoming weak in primary group because addition and exit of the members in primary group (family) was the factor for the transition of the senior citizen to old age home. Old age home is the secondary group and formal institution they have their own rules and regulations, they provide all basic facilities to senior citizens but still secondary group.

Methodology: Qualitative Research approach was used for this study. Senior citizens of the old age homes were the targeted population at district Lahore. Two old age homes were selected randomly at district Lahore. The sample size was consisted on 30 senior citizens and two key informants of the old age homes at Lahore. Through purposive sampling technique 30 senior citizens and 2 administrators of the old age homes were interviewed with the help of interview guide and data was analyzed through thematic analysis.

Conclusion

It was concluded from the responses that their family structure has been changed with the passage of time. Most of the respondents replied that their partner's death became the cause of the family structural and functional changes. Most of the unmarried respondents respond that they did not get married because of some reasons and they had faced the adjustment issues with sibling. Divorced female respondents replied that their family structure has changed when their parents died, after divorced they came back home but sibling had their own families and now they are also dependent upon their children. Few of the respondents admitted that their financial instability changed their family structure; most of the respondents respond that their children's marriages changed the whole structure of the family. More than half of the respondents respond that their children marriages were

exogamy and they had mental compatibility and acceptance issues with each others. Few respondents admitted that their frail relationship with family and work negligence's changed the whole structure of their family life. Few respondents replied that hereditary property is a big factor in breaking up relationships and changing family structures.

- Structural -functional changes in family institution were the key factor in the transition of the senior citizens to old age home.
- The findings of the study revealed that age is the factor that affects the socio-economic status of the senior citizens.
- The findings of this study conclude that a socio-economic factor was the major component that effects the family institution.
- Family and old age home both are essential that there was no comparison between them.
- The findings of this study disclosed that living in old age home is an insult but most accepted the reality that it is the best substitute for those who had no family shelter and income.
- The results of this study revealed that long stay in the daughter's home is a social and cultural stigma.

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