

# **Agewell**

**RESEARCH & ADVOCACY CENTRE**  
(For Needs & Rights of Older Persons)

**AGEWELL STUDY ON**  
**HUMAN RIGHTS**  
**OF OLDER PERSONS IN INDIA**  
**(APRIL 2011)**



**NATIONAL**

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# **HUMAN RIGHTS OF OLDER PERSONS IN INDIA**

## **- A national study**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Population aging is a worldwide phenomenon, and India is no exception. Indian population has approximately tripled during the last 50 years, but the number of elderly Indians has increased more than fourfold. The 2001 census has shown that the elderly population (60+) of India accounted for 77 million and census 2011 projections indicate that elderly population has crossed the 100 million mark. It took more than 100 years for the aged population to double in most of the countries in the world, but in India it has doubled in just 20 years. The life expectancy has also gone up to over 70 years today. Better medical facilities, care and liberal family planning policies made the elderly the fastest growing section of the society in India.

With fast changing socio-economic scenario, industrialization, rapid urbanization, higher aspirations among the youth and the increasing participation of women in the workforce, roots of traditional joint family system has been eroding very fast. In urban areas of the country traditional joint family system has become thing of past. In such changing situations, majority of older persons, who have passed most part of their life with their joint/extended families are on the verge of isolation or marginalization in old age. At this age, when they need family support most, they have to live on their own. Even basic needs & rights of many of them are not addressed. Social marginalization, loneliness, isolation and even negligence in old age lead violation of Human Rights of Older Persons.

Ironically, in India older generations are not aware of their human rights due to high prevalence of illiteracy and lack of awareness. On the other hand, due to comparatively high physical as well as psychological vulnerability their cries for help remain within four-walls, that's why only a few cases of violation of human rights of elderly come out. Ever-increasing numbers of distress calls from older persons clearly indicate disturbing condition of Human Rights of Older Persons in India.

## **OVERVIEW**

### **“Human Rights”**

#### **Definition as per Article 25 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

(1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

#### **Older persons face particular difficulties in the following key areas:**

- Physical And Mental Health;
- Community Care;
- Social Care;
- Housing;
- Transport;
- Employment;
- Income;
- Education And Leisure;
- Utilities And Consumer Protection;
- Access To Information; And
- Decision-Making.

### **HUMAN RIGHTS OF OLDER PERSONS**

- Right to life shall be protected by law.
- Right not to be subjected to inhuman treatment “No-one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”.
- Right to liberty “Everyone has the right to liberty and personal security.
- Right to a fair hearing “In the determination of his civil rights and obligations... everyone is entitled to a fair and public hearing within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial tribunal established by law”.

- “Civil rights and obligations”.
  - the right to respect for home, family and private life
  - the right to freedom of thought and conscience.
  - the right not to be discriminated against age
  - the right to property - everyone is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions
  - the right to education

### **POPULATION AGEING: A U.N. VIEW**

According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, one out of every ten people on the planet is now 60 years of age or older. If the current trend of lowering birth rates and lowering death rates continues, by the year 2050 one out of five people will be aged 60 years or older and by 2150, one out of every three people will be aged 60 years or older. Additionally, the oldest old are the most rapidly expanding segment of the elderly population. Currently, the oldest old make up 11 percent of the 60+ age group and will grow to 19 percent by 2050.

Many governments have support systems in place for elderly persons such as social security and free or discounted medical care, for example, however, most of these systems were built on the premise that there will always be significantly fewer older persons than younger or middle-aged individuals living at one time. Because of declining death rates, these systems are beginning to feel a strain that will only increase over time. Additionally, the older-person support ratio is falling in both more and less developed regions, which could further lessen the ability of societies and governments to care for their aging populations.

These demographic trends create unique challenges for all people, particularly for the governments of nation-states around the globe. Elderly individuals are often subjected to discrimination and abuse because they are perceived as easily taken advantage of. There is also a prevalent belief among many that elderly persons are worthless in today's fast-paced, globalize and increasingly industrialized world. Obviously, with the number of elderly people on earth at any one time rising rapidly, there is an increased urgency to address the rights and roles of elderly persons in our world.

## **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

**Research & Advocacy Centre** at Agewell Foundation (*a consortium of over 1500 NGOs and 6500 volunteers spread across 540 districts of India, committed to initiate better interaction between generations and extend a helping hand*) has recently carried out a nationwide survey to study the status of human rights of Older Persons.

Agewell Research & Advocacy Centre has conducted a survey to assess the status of the violation of human rights of older persons. Under the survey, it was attempted to identify responsible factors for violation of human rights of older persons.

In view of lack of core policies on protection of older people in old age and fast increasing elderly population, study was also focused to suggest or recommend some specific points to policy makers, planners and decision makers so that human rights of older persons could be respected in future and a standard framework could be developed to protect every older person's human rights.

## **METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE DESIGN**

Experienced and qualified volunteers were selected as interviewers and they were provided with proper guidelines, directions, training, etc.

Under the survey campaign, comprehensive interviews were undertaken by managing time-bound schedules to collect information /impression/views from selected older persons from across the country

For the survey a **representative sample of 50000 older persons** (29000 from rural areas and 21000 from urban areas) were interviewed spread across **300 districts of 25 states & Union Territories** of India.

Agewell volunteers' network spread across the country worked as interviewers for the survey. The interviews were conducted during the month of **March 2011**.

**Sample Units**

The sample units were selected based on random sampling but taken care to incorporate the representative views of the country from six divisions as per following;

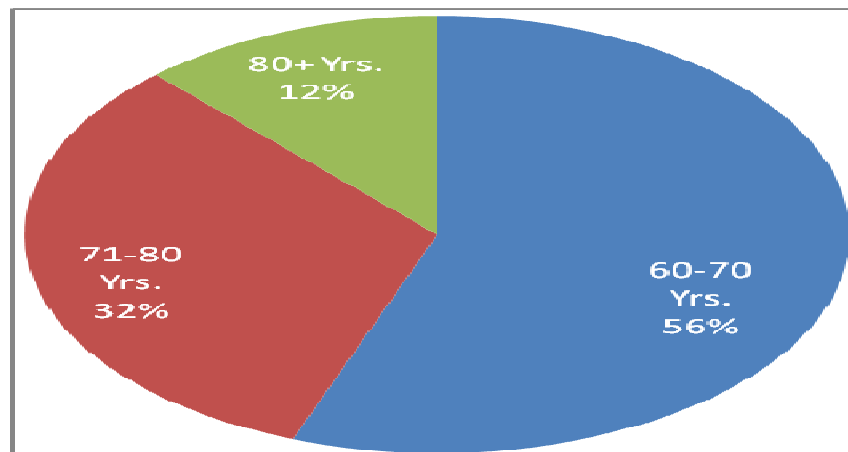
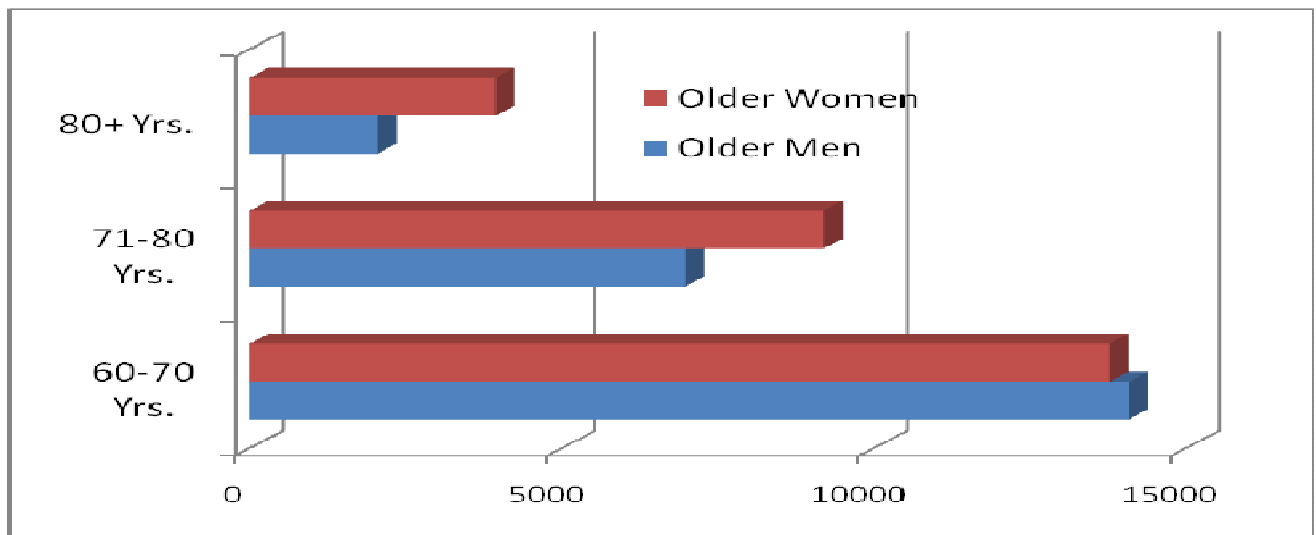
<i>S. No</i>	<i>States/UTs</i>	<i>No of sample districts</i>	<i>No of respondents</i>
1.	<b>Region 1 – Delhi &amp; NCR</b> Delhi & NCR (Parts of Haryana & UP)	15	7700
2.	<b>Region 2 – North India</b> Rest Uttar Pradesh, Rest Haryana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Chandigarh & Uttarakhand	70	8815
3.	<b>Region 3 – South India</b> Andhra Pradesh , Tamilnadu, Kerala & Karnataka	60	8810
4.	<b>Region 4 – East India</b> West Bengal, Orissa, Assam, Mizoram, Tripura & Nagaland	55	6848
5.	<b>Region 5 – West India</b> Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Gujarat & Goa	50	8612
6.	<b>Region 6 – Central India</b> Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand & Chhattisgarh	50	9215
	<b>All India Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>50000</b>

**Age-group & gender wise classification of respondents**

Since older persons have comparatively longer life span, under the survey older people were divided in three simple age-groups so that more realistic findings could be achieved out of the responses.

Respondents were further categorized in age groups & gender wise to understand the changing trends of old age better.

Categories	60-70 Years	71-80 Years	81+ Years	Total
<b>Older Men</b>	14082	6974	2044	<b>23100</b>
<b>Older Women</b>	13774	9188	3938	<b>26900</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>27856</b>	<b>16162</b>	<b>5982</b>	<b>50000</b>



- More than a half of representative sample size (Approx. 56%) comprises of young older persons i.e. older persons in the age group of 60-70 years of age.
- In the age groups of 71-80 & 80+, % of elderly women, who were contacted by interviewers were higher essentially because of their larger presence.

### **Sample Respondents**

Since India is a vast and geographically diverse country where majority of Indian population still lives in villages, older persons have different lifestyle in different parts of the country. Traditionally, elderly women in India have also different lifestyle in different parts.

With objective to assess the status of older persons living in various situations and geographical conditions, the populace of 60+ years was randomly selected as per the 4 groups as under;

- I. Rural elderly men
- II. Rural elderly women
- III. Urban elderly men
- IV. Urban Elderly women

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Old Men</b>	<b>Old women</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Rural</b>	13100	15900	29000
<b>Urban</b>	10000	11000	21000
<b>Total</b>	<b>23100</b>	<b>26900</b>	<b>50000</b>

In each group the target was to include every section of the society, specifically

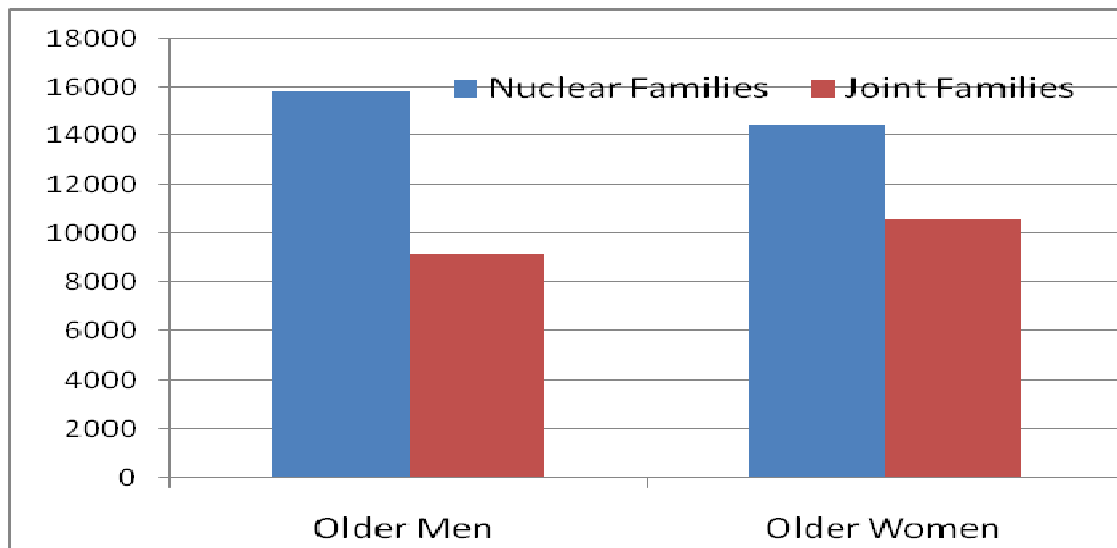
- Retired older persons
- Non-pensioners/self-employed
- Labourers/farmers
- Housewives
- Professionals/ businessmen
- Literate
- Illiterate
- Financially secure
- BPL (below poverty line) family



## **MAJOR FINDINGS**

### **Popularity of nuclear/small families was found to be main reason of violation of human rights of older persons**

- 75.5% of older persons reportedly living in inhuman conditions or going through crisis in their life are living alone or they are from nuclear/small families.
- 60.54% of older persons interviewed during survey were found living alone or in nuclear/small families. 30272 older persons out of 50000 older persons said that they don't live in joint families.
- 22250 respondents said that they would like to live in a joint family but their circumstances do not allow them. Only 8022 said that they are happy living alone.
- Only 2 out of 5 older persons were living with joint families. Only 19728 older persons out of 50000 older persons have joint families.
- Percentile of older women living in joint family system (55%) was found higher than older men.



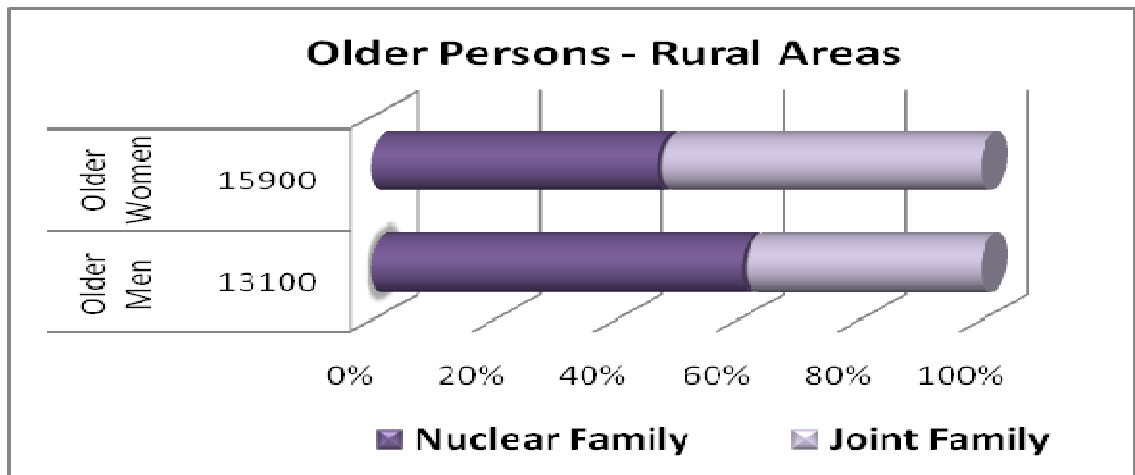
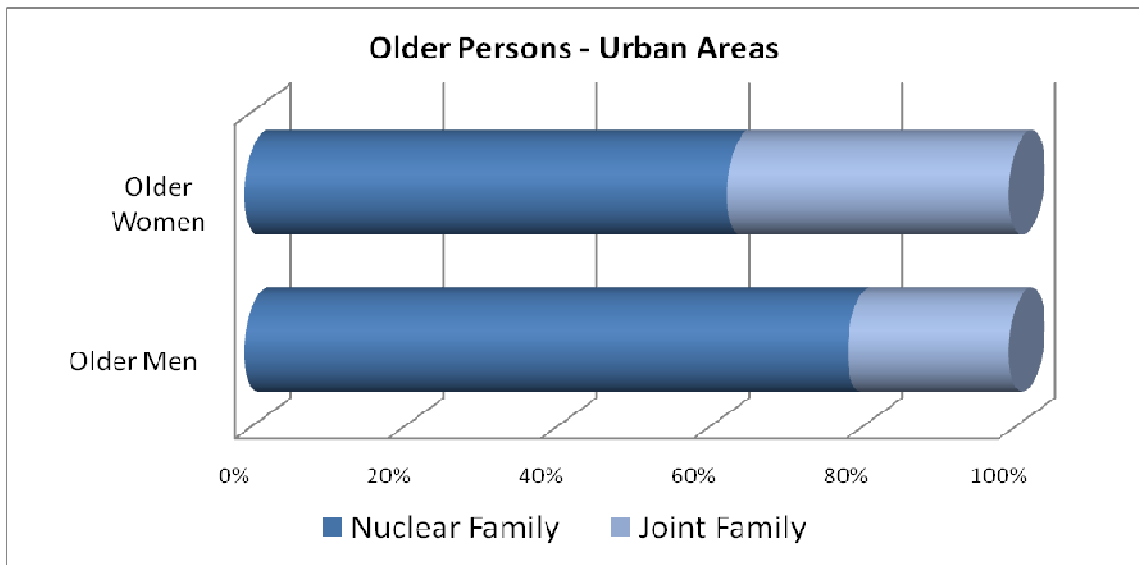
### **Voilation of Human Rights of older persons is higher in urban areas of the country in comparision to rural areas.**

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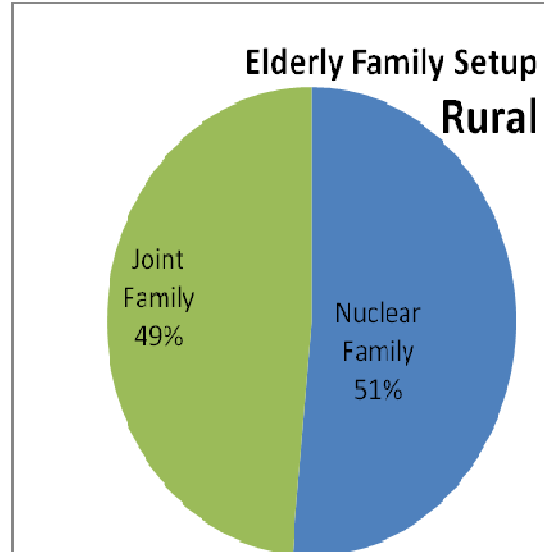
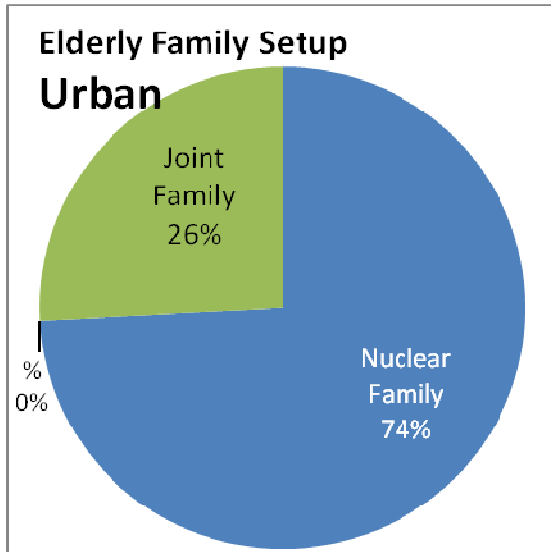
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- 65% older persons living in urban areas reported that they had to go through critical phase in their life or have to live in abject situations due to their old age.
- 74.16% of older persons living in urban areas (78.9% older men & 69.4% older women) were living in nuclear/small families. Only 25.84% older persons (21.1% older men and 30.6% older women) have joint families. In cities only 5168 older persons out of total 21000 older persons were found living in joint families.



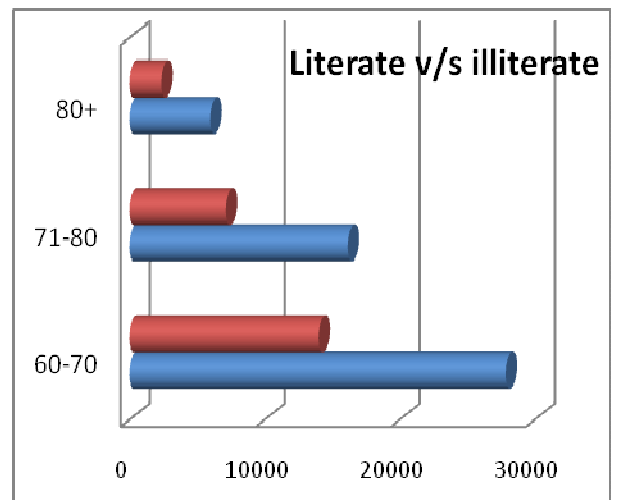
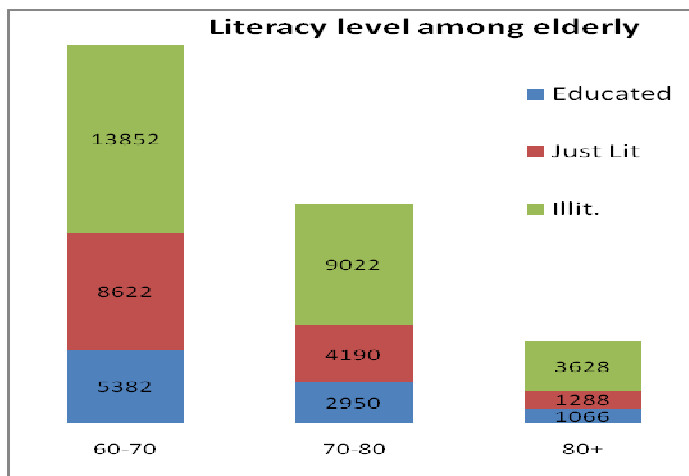
- Whereas in rural areas nearly half the older persons (51.46%) were found living with their joint families. In villages 46.9.1% older men & 50.1% older

women were from joint families. In rural areas 13560 out of total 29000 rural elderly have joint families.

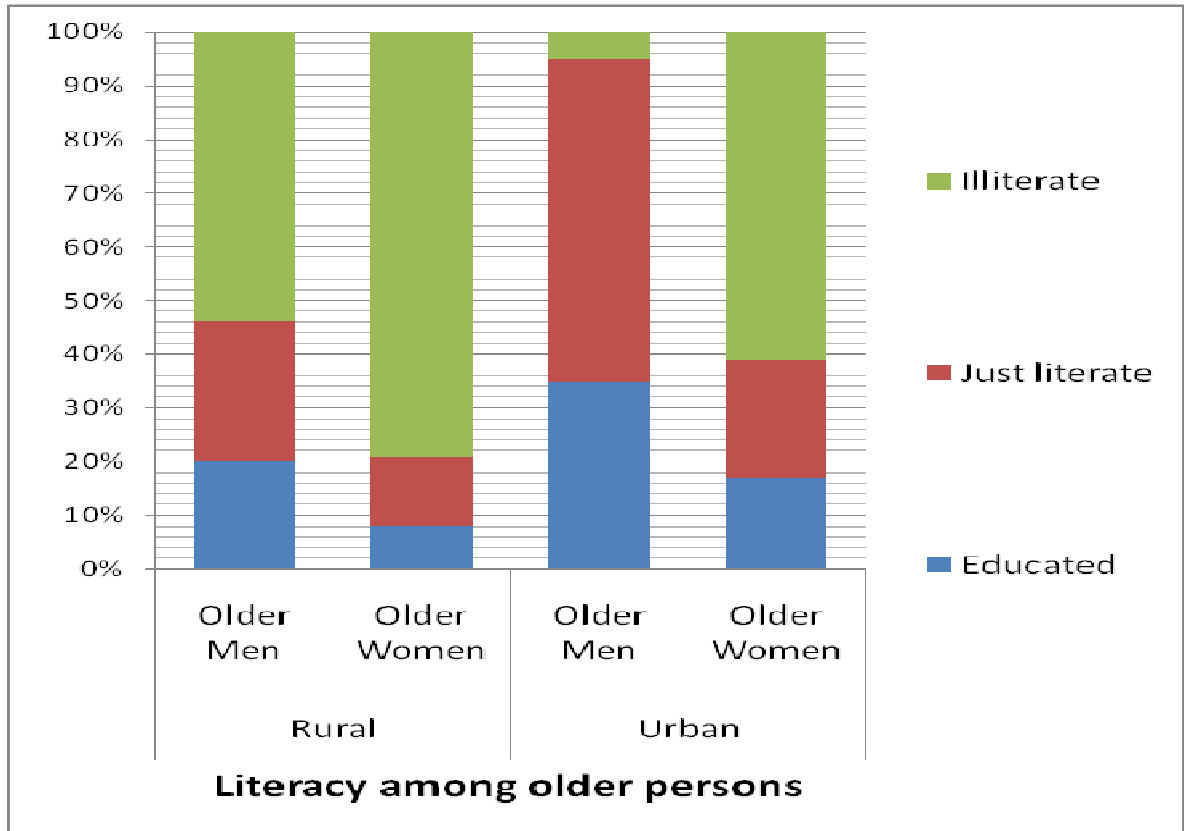


**Lack of awareness about Human Rights of older persons is one of the major reasons of ever-increasing cases of violation of human rights of older persons.** In rural areas due to lack of awareness about human rights old people were found leading a miserable life. Literacy has direct connection with awareness of Human Rights of Older Persons.

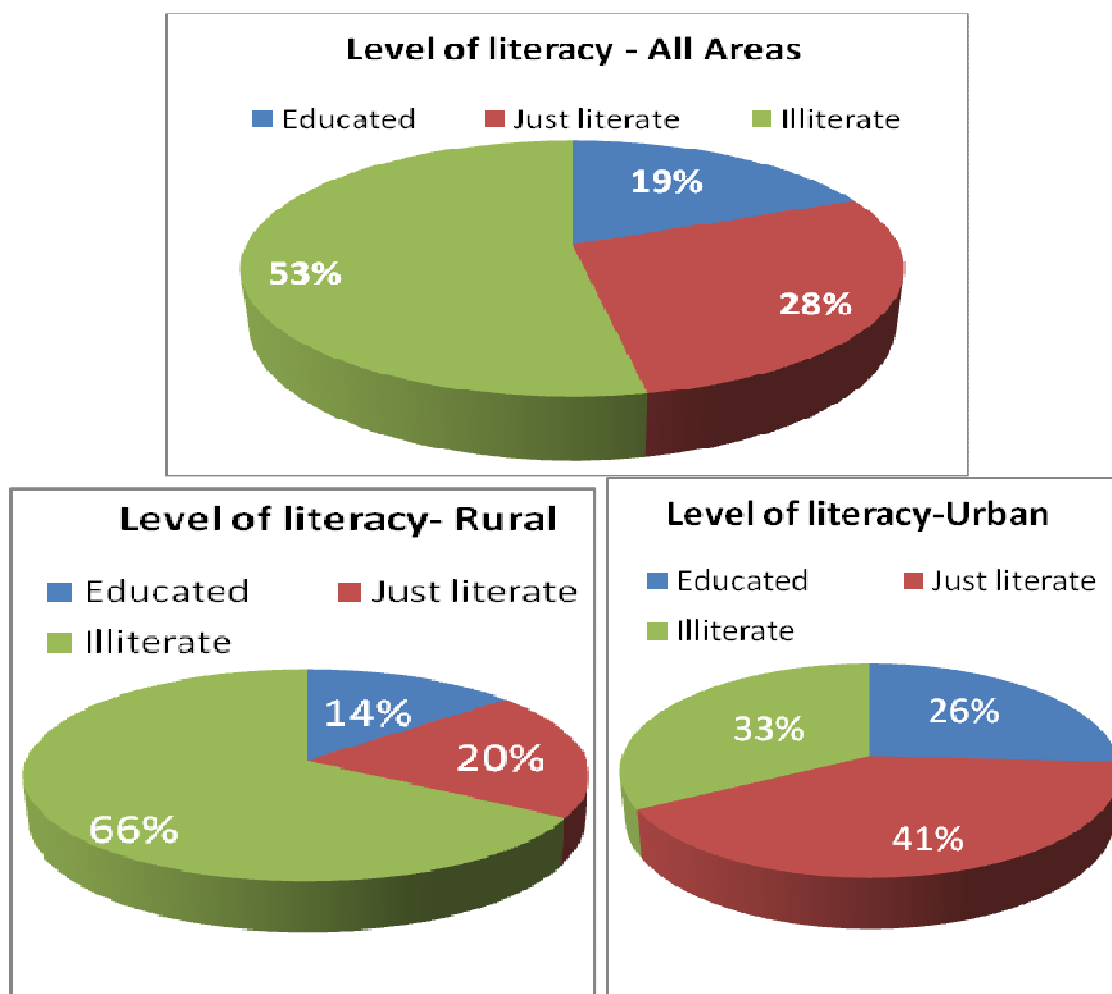
- Overall 47% older persons contacted during the survey were found literate in all age groups. In age group of young older persons (60-70 years) 50.27% of older persons are literate. In the age group of 71-80 44.18% older persons were found literate and in oldest older persons category (80+) 39.35% older persons are literate.



- When data collected by survey teams were analysed it was found that more than half (approx. 53%) older persons are found illiterate, 28.2% older persons are just literate and only 18.8% older persons are educated.



- 26502 older persons out of 50000 older persons (18938 out of 29000 older persons in rural areas & 7584 out of 21000 older persons in urban areas respectively) are in the category of illiterate people.
- In urban areas approx. every third older person is illiterate where in rural areas almost 2/3<sup>rd</sup> older persons are illiterate. In urban areas 25.87% older persons are educated whereas only 14.1% rural elderly are found educated.
- Illiteracy among elderly women was found slightly higher in both, rural and urban areas.



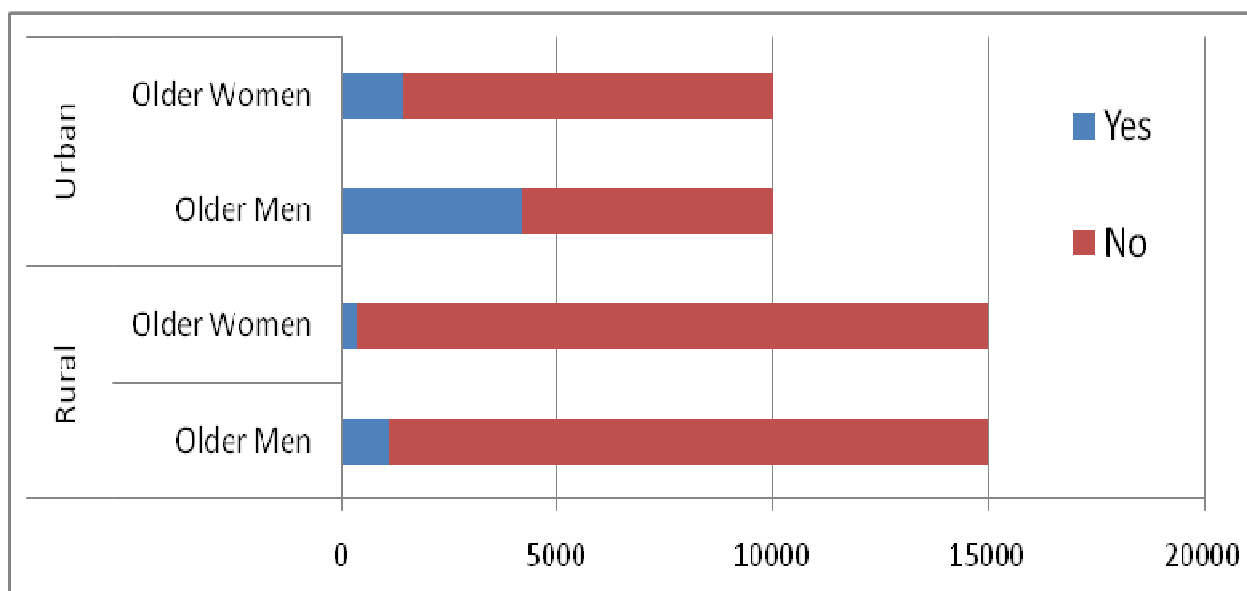
**85.9% older persons had never heard about Human Rights of Older Persons.**

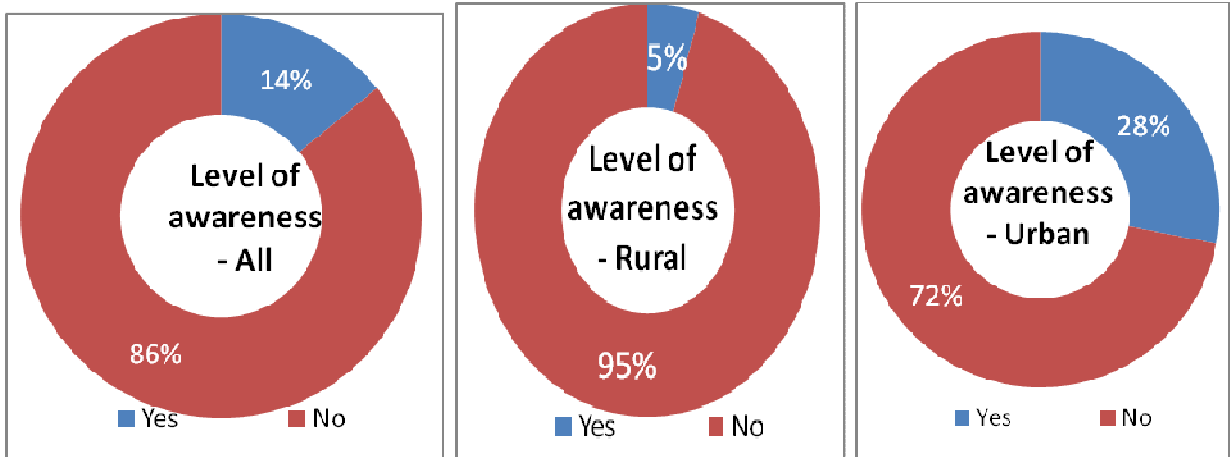
- Only 14.1% older persons said that they know about Human Rights or heard about Human Rights. 42948 older persons (85.9%) out of total 50000 older persons approached by Agewell volunteers during survey expressed their ignorance about Human Rights.
- In rural areas awareness level about Human Rights was very low in comparison to urban areas. In villages only 4.81% older persons said that they have heard about Human Rights while 95.2% rural elderly have no knowledge of human rights of older persons or they have never heard the term ‘Human Rights’.
- In urban areas awareness about Human Rights is higher where 28.04% older persons said that they know about human rights of older persons.

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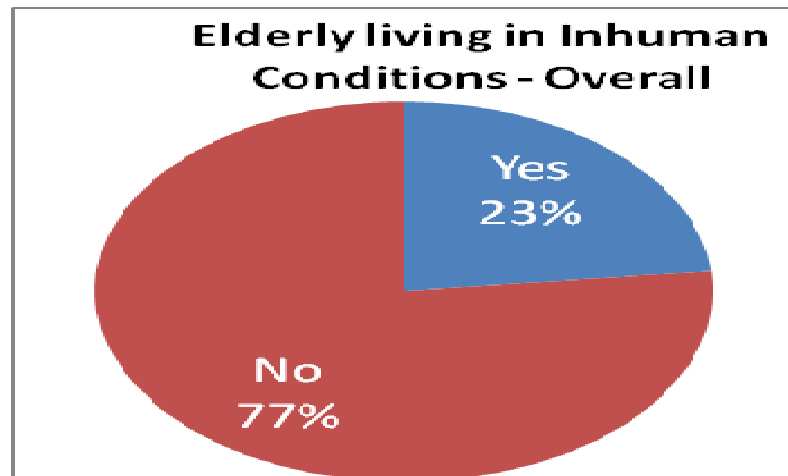
- Since literacy rate among elderly women is low, awareness about Human Rights is also less among older women, in both rural and urban areas. In rural areas out of total 15900 older women interviewed by interviewers during the month of March 2011, only 351 older women said that they have heard about Human Rights or they know little about what human rights of older persons are.

<b>Awareness about Human Rights of Older Persons among Older Persons</b>										
Have you heard about Human Rights?										
	Rural		Urban		Total				Urban Old People	
	Older Men	Older Women	Older Men	Older Women		%	Rural old people	%		%
<b>Yes</b>	1011	351	4241	1595	<b>7198</b>	<b>14.4</b>	1362	<b>4.69</b>	5836	<b>27.79</b>
<b>No</b>	12089	15549	5759	9405	<b>42802</b>	<b>85.6</b>	27638	<b>95.30</b>	15164	<b>72.21</b>
	<b>13100</b>	<b>15900</b>	10000	<b>11000</b>	<b>50000</b>	100	29000	100	21000	100





**Over 23.3% older persons (respondents) were found living in inhuman conditions or (in other words) facing violation of their human rights in old age.**



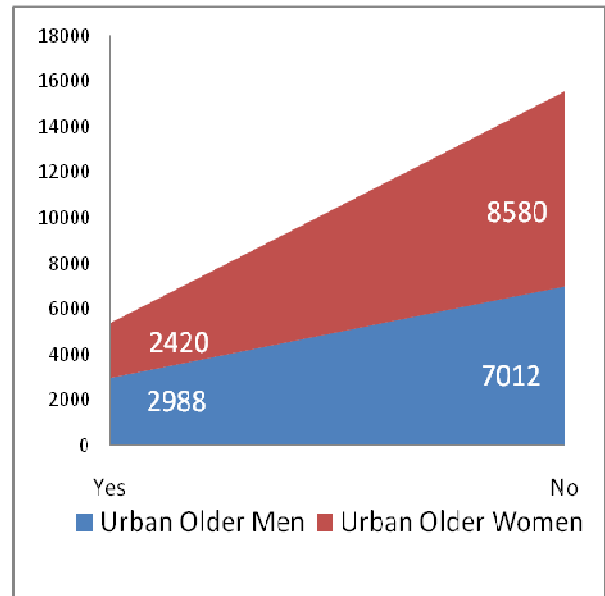
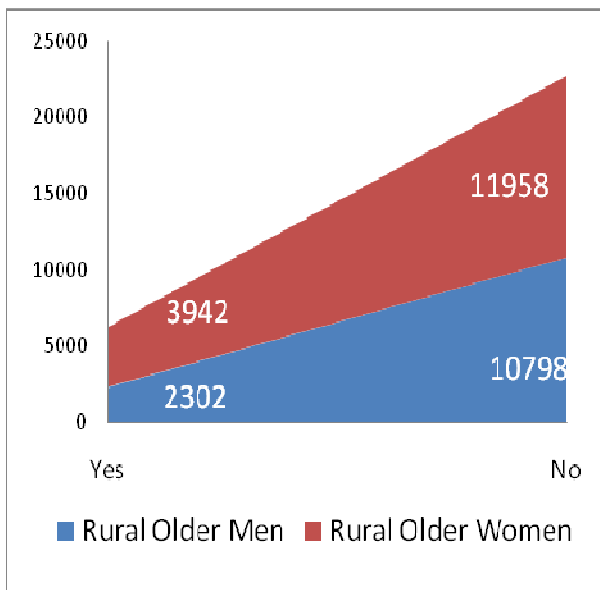
- When survey team tried to assess the living conditions and situations of respondent elderly, they found that human rights of 11652 older persons out of total 50000 older persons were not being protected. They were not even getting their basic rights from their respective families/societies.
- In the opinion of interviewers 76.7% were found leading satisfactory life or were found with no complaints from their life in old age.
- Surprisingly, in urban areas approximately 30% of older men were found complaining about protection of their basic rights (including human rights).

2988 out of total 10000 elderly men were living in inhuman conditions according to interviewers' assessment.

Interviewers were asked to assess the living condition of respondent on the basis of following;

- His/her house/ living room and surroundings
- His/her clothes/ household
- His/her health according to his/her age)
- His/her source of income
- Interpersonal relationship with other family members
- Level of dependency on others

- In rural areas, 2302 & 3942 older men & older women respectively were found living in inhuman conditions as per study.
- In urban areas for many older persons non-availability of family support system or less interaction with family members was identified by interviewers as major factor of violation of basic/human rights of older persons.



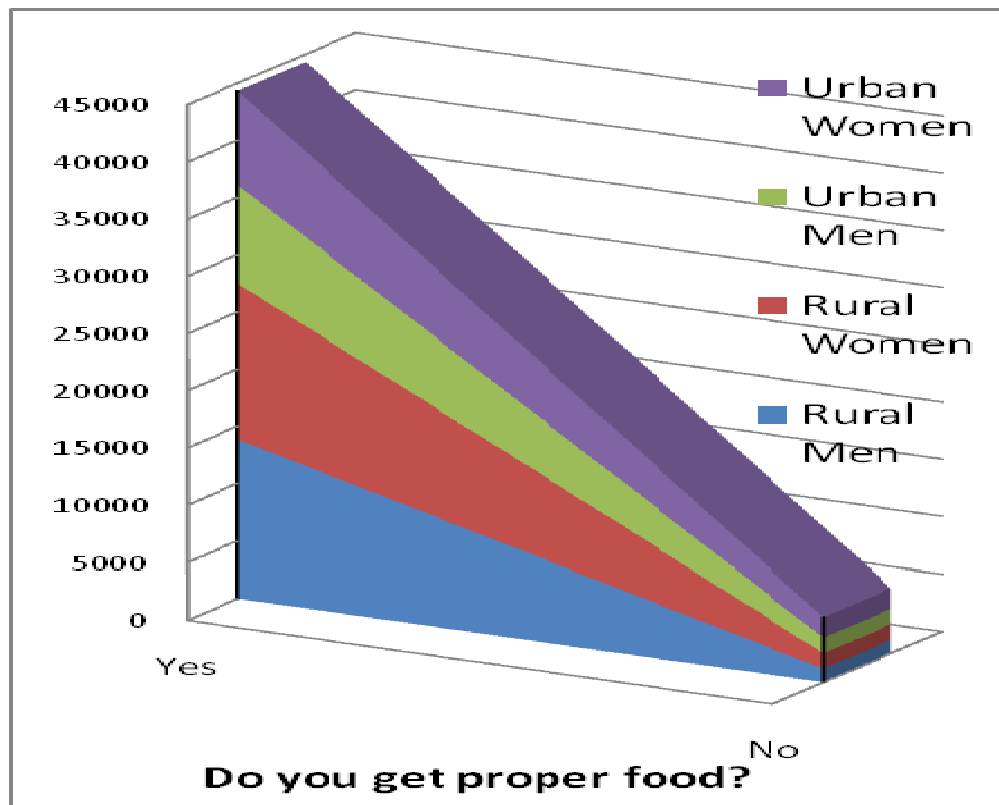
- Cases of self-denial of Human Rights by older persons were also noticed by interviewers because of beliefs and customs prevailing in different societies.



- Among older persons living in inhuman or miserable conditions, 86% of them are widowers/widows and children-less old people. Most of them have detached themselves from physical comforts and facilities. Instead of complaining about their physical life they boast about their spiritual life.

**12.9% older persons revealed that they are not getting proper food in old age.**

- When asked about most basic human right of older persons, whether they get proper food or not, 6444 older persons out of total 50000 older persons (12.9% older persons) comprising of 3101 rural elderly and 3343 urban elderly said that they are not getting proper food in old age.



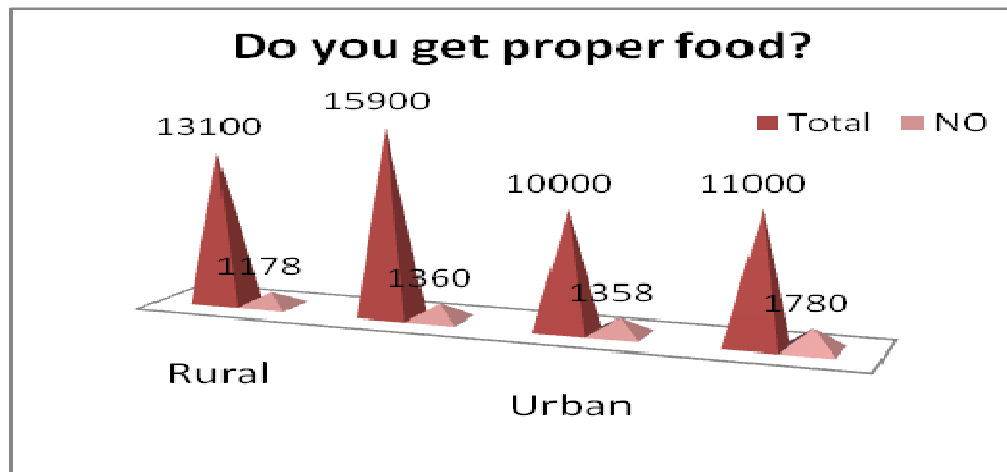
**For interviewers convenience, Proper food is described as**

- Availability of food on time
- Mix of nutrients in food
- Food served with respect
- Diet available according to health conditoinis

### Interviewers impressions

Most of older persons believe that they should not eat much or they shall not be complaining about food at their age. *“My children know better, so I have reduced my diet.” “Kam Khao Sukhi Raho”(If you eat less, you remain happy) “Now its their (children) turn to eat more.” “We need a little food to keep going”,* etc. were among few common comments received from older persons.

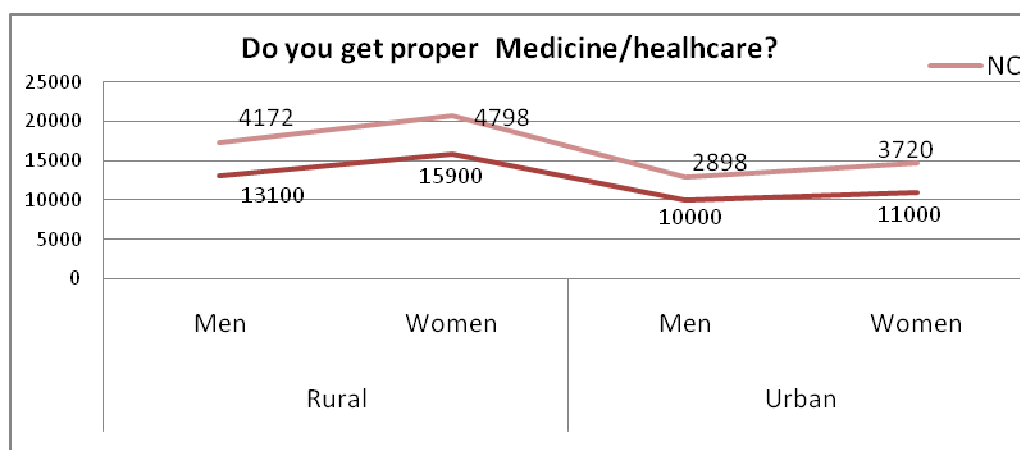
- Every sixth old person (16.7%) living in urban areas is not getting proper food today. 3343 older persons informed interviewers that getting even normal food is a big problem for them.



- In some rural areas only 8.46% elderly were struggling for proper food in old age. In areas subject to poverty, lack of family support was found to be major cause for this situation.

**Approx. every third older person in the country is not getting proper medicine/health care in old age.**

- On analysis of data obtained by interviewers from 50000 respondents, it was found that only 68.8% older persons have access to necessary medicines, health care and medical facilities while 31.2% older persons said that they are not getting proper medicines/health care in old age.



- According to 15588 older persons interviewed (8970 rural elderly & 6618 urban elderly) getting medicines / health care facilities for various diseases in old age has been their concern due to various reasons.

**For interviewers' convenience Proper Medicine/ Health care was described as**

- Availability of medicines in need
- Availability of money for medical expenses
- Available of care-giver (family members/relative/any other)
- Access to doctors/medical facilities (Hospital/clinic/Health Centre)

**Interviewers impressions**

Older persons believe that diseases of eyes, joint pains, diabetese, hearing problems, etc. are due to their old age and they often seem careless towards these diseases. Older men were less vocal in comparision to older women about their health conditions. Statements like “Ab dawa nahi dua chahiye” (in my age I need blessings rather than medicines). “Ab to umar ho chali” (I am too old for medication now) “There is no one to listen to me”, etc. were common.

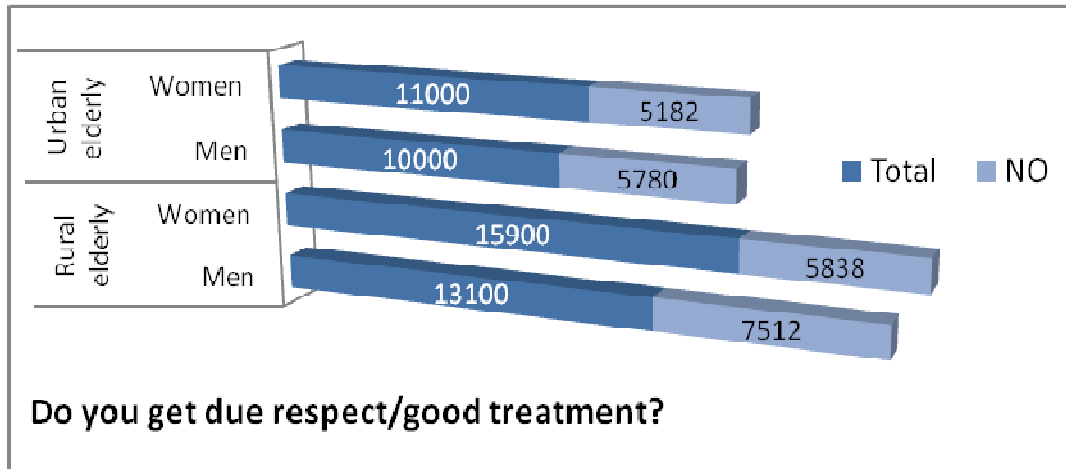
- Again in urban areas getting medicines/health care is a bigger problem in comparison to rural areas. In urban areas where 21000 older persons were interviewed, 33.09% older persons (2898 old men & 3710 old women)

mentioned that they are not getting proper medication/ medical care in old age.

- In rural areas only 26.6% elderly (7970 out of total 29000 rural older persons contacted) complained about medicines/health care in old age.

**Every second older person is not getting due respect or good treatment from his/her family member/society.**

- Survey shows that overall 48.6% elderly (44.5% in rural areas and 54.81% in urban areas) in our country are not being respected by their family members/ relatives and socieity. According to survey data, 12350 rural older persons (out of 29000 rural older persons) & 5481 urban older persons (out of 21000 urban older persons) reported that their family members/relatives do not respect them and invariably ill-treat them. Mostly they are made to feel that they are redundant because of their Old Age.



**Due respect/good treatment in old age was described as**

- Love and respect from family members
- Interpersonal relations with them
- Respect from friends/relatives/society
- Take care of his/her old age related needs
- Honour of his/her rights

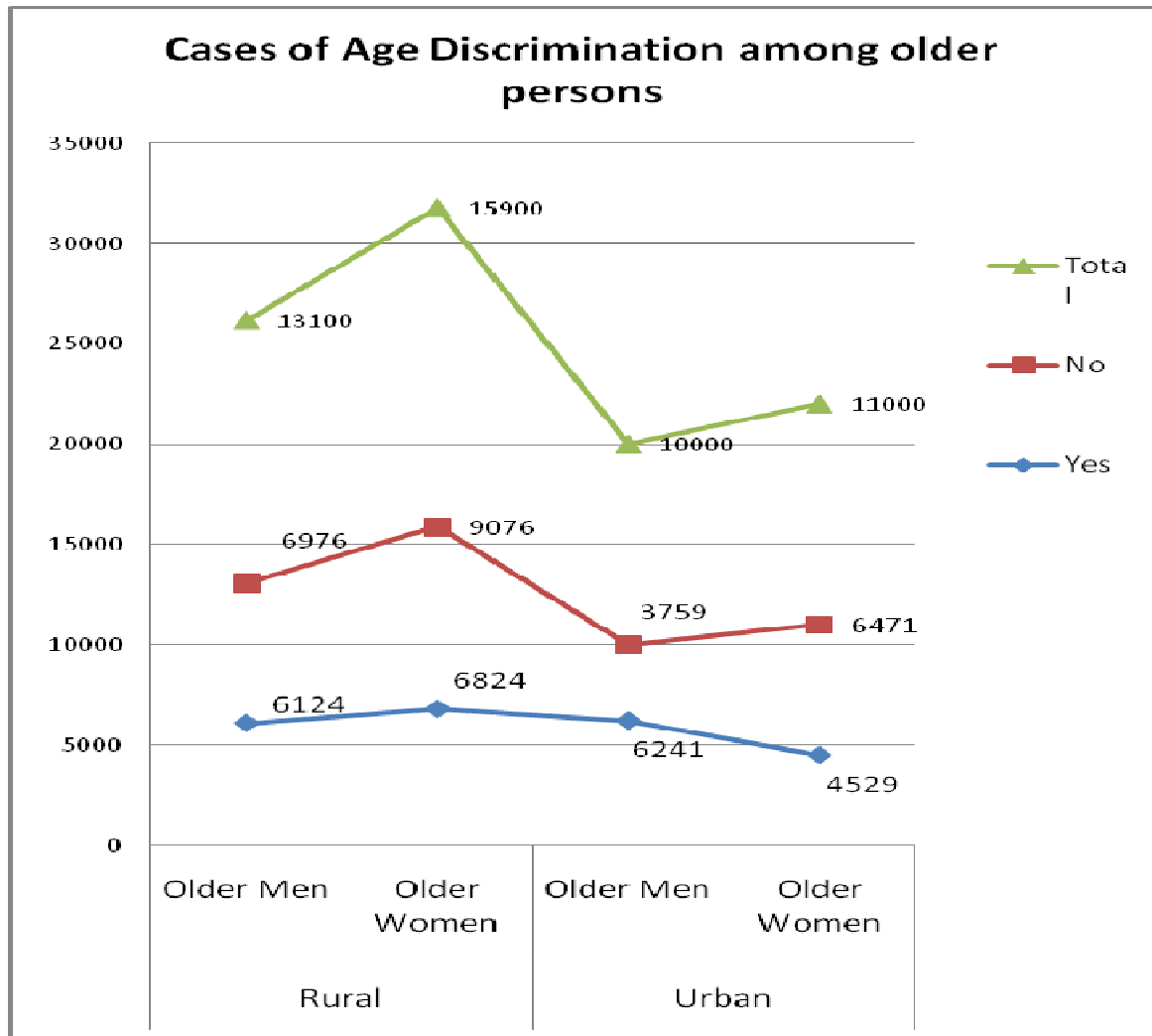
### **Interviewers impressions**

Older persons are respected in society in general but within their individual families, majority of older persons feel insulted on many occasions. Property related issues, interference in family matters, interpersonal relations, unemployment in old age, excessive medical expenses, dispute among siblings, greediness of younger generation, fall of morals, etc. are major reasons of disrespect or mistreatment of older persons.

- Surprisingly, older men are more prone to mistreatment in their respective families and societies. In rural areas 7512 older men do not get good treatment and due respect in comparison to 5838 older women. In urban areas too, 5780 older men in comparison to 5182 older women reported to survey team that they are not being well-treated.

### **47.4% older persons were discriminated because of their Age**

- When volunteers asked older persons about any kind of discrimination due to their old age they face, 52.35% in urban areas and 44.1% in rural areas accept that due to their age they were humiliated occasionally or treated disrespectfully.



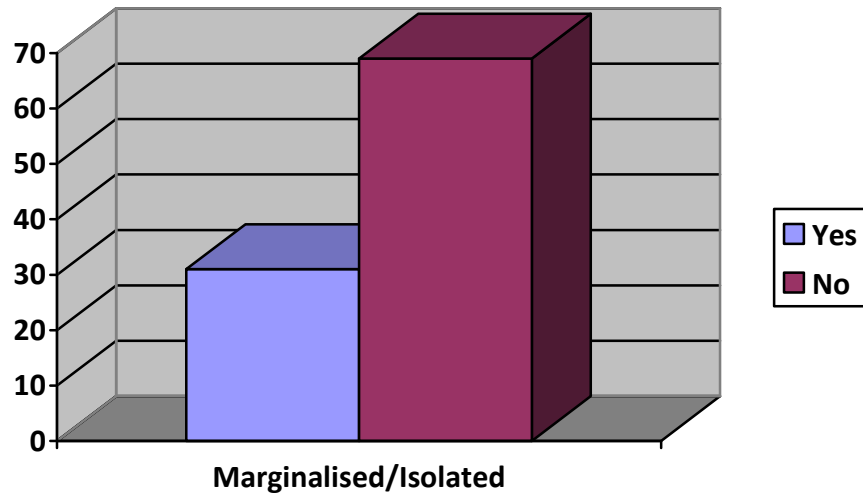
- When data analyzed on gender basis, it was found that older men face age-discrimination more often. 53.4% older men in comparison to 41.4% older women faced discrimination in employment, family matters, family functions, participation in social-cultural activities, etc.

### Most common problems being faced by older persons due to their old age

- Marginalization / disregard
  - Due to settling down of children’s families in other parts\
  - Due to demise of dear ones

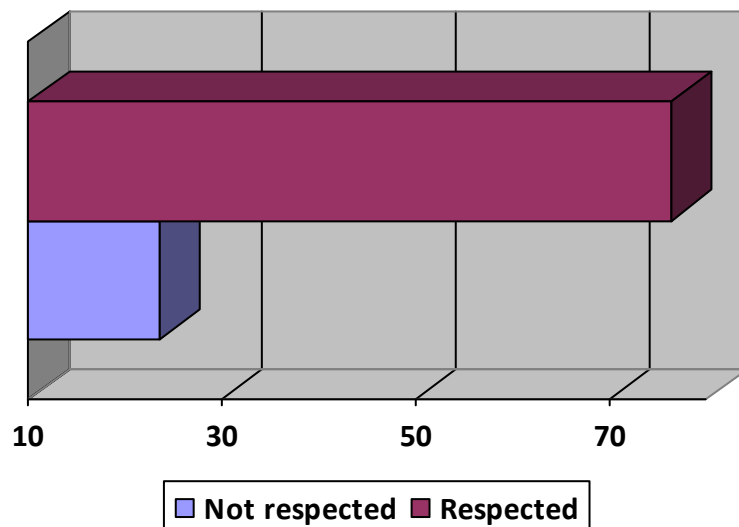
- Due to unhappy relationship with family members

**33.65% older persons were found marginalized/isolated**



- No /less respect / no say in family matters
  - Due to property related matters
  - Due to family feuds
  - Due to interference in family matters

**23.6% older persons were found ill-treated**

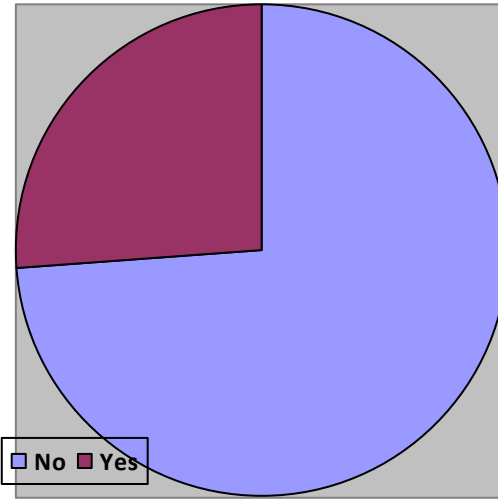


- No/ not easy access to medicine/healthcare
  - Due to fragile health
  - Due to no/less money for medicines/test/treatment
  - Due to no one to accompany them

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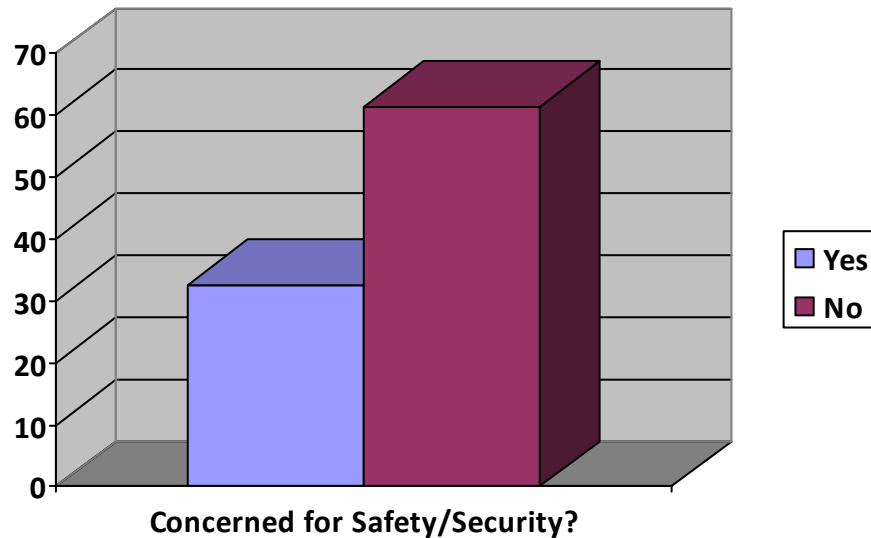
- Due to much distance of medical facilities

**26.1 % older persons have no/ not easy access to medicine/healthcare**



- Safety & Security to their life & properties
  - Due to no /poor law & order status
  - Due to loneliness / isolation
  - Due to police inaction

**32.5 % older persons have safety & security concerns**

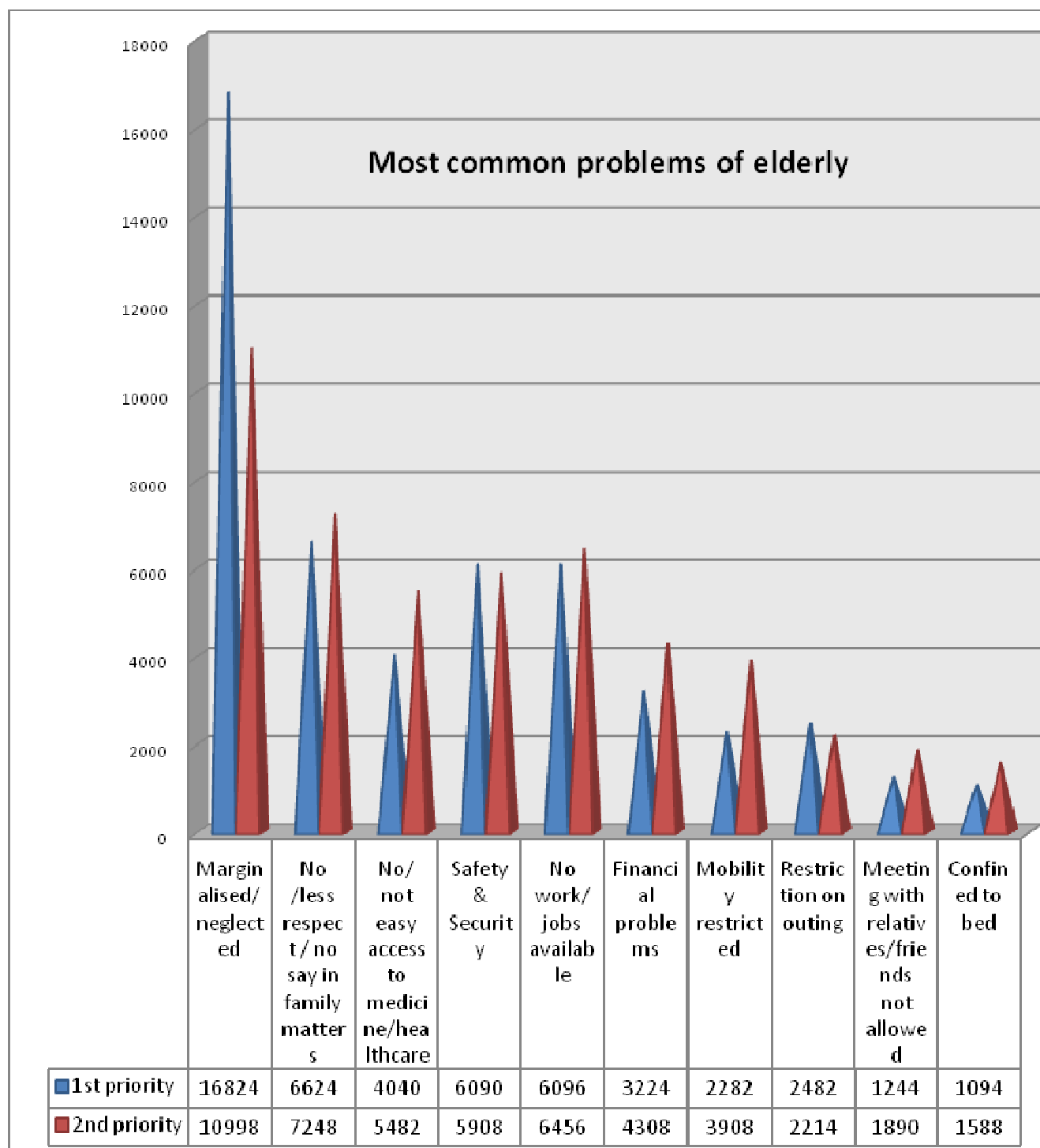


- No work/ jobs available due to old age
  - Due to physically fragile health
  - Due to traditional concept about old people
  - Due to mobility limitations

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- Due to popularity of modern technology
- Financial problems, less/no income
  - Due to retirement
  - Due to no employment
  - Due to no pension / social security system
- Mobility restricted by family members
  - Because other family members don't like that their elderly family members share their concerns with others
  - Due to confinement to bed
- Depression / psychological problems
  - Due to loss of dear ones
  - Due to loneliness
  - Due to no/less social interaction
- When older persons were asked about their most pertinent old age related problems, majority of older persons said that marginalization by family members/society is their No. 1 concern.
- Almost 1/3<sup>rd</sup> older persons (33.65% 16824 older persons) gave 1<sup>st</sup> priority to marginalization and neglect as their cause of pain, while 12998 older persons (22%) indicated it their 2<sup>nd</sup> most upsetting problem.
- 6624 older persons indicated respect in old age and their interaction with family members/relatives as their most common problem in old age. 7248 older persons expressed it as their second most common disturbing issue.



- No work/job opportunities available and safety & security concern in old age were also adjudged as highly prioritized & most common concerns of older persons.

## Representative statements from older persons

*“Old Age has become hell for us due to mistreatment of our daughter-in-law with us. For sake of happiness of our son and grand-children, we prefer to keep quiet and ignore her (daughter-in-law’s) misbehavior.”*

- Pankaj Luthra (75) & Nirmla Devi (71), Munirka, New Delhi

*“There is no one around to take care of me. I anyhow manage my work like cooking, cleaning of house, etc. With limited pension as only source of income, I cannot afford servant/maid.”*

- Sudhakar Dasgupta, Rourkela, Orissa.

*“My children are settled down in Bangalore & Mumbai, They want to keep me with them. I find it difficult to adjust with their respective families. Being alone, security from anti-social elements has turned into a bigger problem for me.”*

- Suryakant Trivedi, 75, Retired Govt. employee, Noida

*“My family members don’t allow me to visit my village, even on special occasions. Even during family functions they don’t allow me to interact with guests & relatives and keep me busy with household chores. After death of my husband, they treat me as their maid. ”.*

Sumati Deshpande, 70-year-old widow, Nagpur, Maharashtra

*“Today I have no place to sleep in the house, which I have built with my hard-earned money. My sons has occupied entire house gradually and forced me to stay at my daughter’s house. I don’t want to indulge myself in any court case, instead want peace of mind in old age. To keep my daughter’s family happy I still work at nearby furniture shop”*

Mohd. Abdul Khan, 75-year-old carpenter, Hyderabad

*“I am diabetic patient for past 12 years and my eye sight is very poor. I have to go through many tests every month. But visiting doctor’s clinic and hospital is very tough task for me. There is no one to accompany me. Sometimes I have to live at risk for more than 2 months.”*

Ramcharan Goswami, 73, Fatehpur, UP

*“Old Age is not a good thing for me. At 60 when I needed more money for my children’s marriage and for my wife’s treatment, I am retired. Suddenly my income has reduced remarkably. At this juncture, you are totally frustrated, when you are totally fit and experienced but could not find a suitable job for you just because of your AGE.”*

Radhakrishna Iyer, Kottayam, Kerala

*“It hurt me a lot when people don’t hear me carefully and takes my views lightly. Even police had ignored our complaints & requests when I approached them for help. People think that Old People have no work to do but to complain”*

Sheela Kumaran, 66, Bangalore, Karnataka

*“My son, daughter-in-law & grand-children keep me locked from outside whenever they go out. Sometimes, even for days I have to live in conditions like of a prison. They take all my pension money and scold when I spent money without their permission.”*

Dayaram Bhandari, 81, Indore, MP

## **OBSERVATIONS**

For most of the older persons Human Rights is a new term for their basic rights. Awareness about Human Rights of Older Persons among older persons is negligible. Young old people (60+) living in cities is generally familiar with Human Rights.

Transformation of traditional joint family system into nuclear or small family system is one of the main factors responsible for violation of human rights of older persons.

In urban areas cases of violation of human rights of elderly population is on rise in comparison to rural areas. Popularity of small/nuclear family system, lack of intergenerational interaction, less social interaction of older persons, age discrimination, non-existence of inclusive social security system in the country, etc are among the most important reasons of miserable condition of older persons in urban areas.

Older persons in the age-group of 60-70, i.e. young older people are more aggressive towards protection of their human rights. Due to high level of awareness about their Human Rights they don't like to compromise with circumstances or situations, instead they cry and demand for their rights.

People entering in the bracket of 60-70 years don't like "Old Age" tag attached to them. Interestingly, they don't digest the fact that they have become old, that's why they feel hurt when treatment or behavior of other people is changed towards them due to their growing age.

Due to fast growing population of older persons, ever-increasing gap between generations and fast demanding lifestyle of young generatoins, for majority of older persons life is still a struggle, even in Old Age.

## **CONCLUSION**

Progress of human civilization, advancement in medical science and healthier lifestyle of people has obviously increased life of Old Age. Ironically, changed socio-economic conditions have completely changed living conditions of older persons in the country.

In changed set up, old people face increased incidences of age discrimination, ageism, elder abuse and mistreatment of older community, which are strictly against any civilized society.

Awareness of Human Rights of Older Persons in the society, particularly among older persons and protection of their human rights has become an uphill task for all of us.

To decrease the incidences of age-discrimination, age-discriminatory policies like retirement policies in both government and public sector, various reservation policies need to be amended.

Today, we urgently need an inclusive social security program for older persons at grass root level while utilizing tools like value based education, awareness generation, research & advocacy in order to protect Human Rights of Older Persons.

India today has a very large population (and ever increasing) of old people who are the first timers (as old persons in their families). Most of them have not seen their own parents living this long.

For them Old Age is a new experience for which they never prepared themselves.

Though everyone wants to live for as long as possible, preparation for Old Age is an alien concept. The individual or his/her family no one seems to be prepared for Old Age.

Even the policies for old people are more cosmetic than effective. Rights of an individual in old age are considered as more of a moral responsibility of the family members. No one seems to be concerned about the fact that an individual who is old has certain basic human rights.

In the fast changing circumstances when the number of old people in every society is increasing at a very fast pace we need to:

- Inculcate a sense of responsibility towards needs & rights of older persons through curriculum of School students.
- Re-look at all the policy formulations and its implementation with a practical approach towards needs & rights of old people

We all want to live a long life but we almost not plan for our Old Age. Be it an individual, a family, society in general or the government, each one of us needs to be sensitive towards needs & rights of old people

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