

Agewell Foundation

(In Special Consultative Status with the ECOSOC at United Nations since 2011)

STUDY ON PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS HUMAN RIGHTS OF OLDER PERSONS

Agewell Foundation Research and Advocacy
Centre



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INTRODUCTION

With an ever changing socio-economic and demographic scenario across the country, living conditions of older persons have also changed remarkably. Today, with advancement of medical science, a better standard of life and overall development in the country, not only is the number of old people growing rapidly, their life expectancy is also gaining new heights every year. As per analysis of census 2011 data, population of older persons in India has already crossed the unique mark of 100 million old people in Indian population.

Old people need family support and care but with increasing popularity of nuclear family system and continuous migration they are constantly being marginalized and isolated, particularly in urban areas.

Emotional, social, financial, medical and legal security structure is getting diluted and it leads to continuous denial of their human rights.

Human rights are rights people are entitled to simply because they are human beings.

Older men and women have the same rights as anyone else. Our human rights do not change as we grow older. However, there are no visible human rights for older persons under international law today.

In absence of family support and care, sense of security is missing among older persons, which is making their life painful and insecure day by day. In highly industrialized as well as commercialized areas of the country, most of the older persons find themselves isolated and marginalized as their old age related needs remain unattended at all levels. Despite growing share in population they are not getting due attention in the society.

Human Rights of Older Persons

- Right to life shall be protected by law
- Right not to be subjected to inhuman treatment
- Right to liberty and personal security
- Everyone is entitled to a fair and public hearing
- “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

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

Research & Advocacy Centre at Agewell Foundation has carried out a survey to study the general **perceptions towards human rights of older persons**. Under the survey, it was attempted to assess the situations of older persons and to identify factors governing their life in old age and violation of their human rights.

The survey questionnaire was developed in an easy to understand language and translated into Hindi for the convenience of volunteers/interviewers. It was developed in such a way that all relevant information could be collected from respondents while interacting with them.

Human rights of older persons is a broad term which is determined by numerous factors associated with old age. To assess the level of security among older persons and their human rights many issues concerning old age were identified and included in the survey.

METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE DESIGN

Dedicated, 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 across the country. For the survey a **representative sample of 32100 respondents from all age groups** were interviewed. Respondents were interacted through internet, phone and personal interaction

Agewell volunteers' network spread across the country worked as interviewers for the survey. **Google India** has also provided their staff members as volunteers for the survey.

The interviews were conducted during the month of **July and August 2013**.

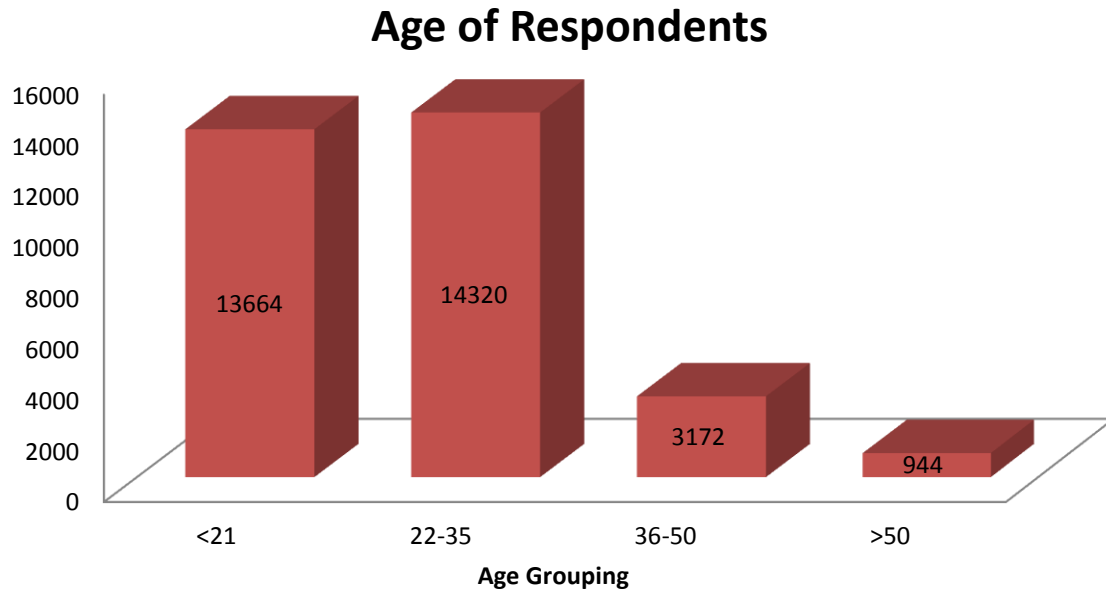
SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

The sample units were selected based on random sampling but taken care to incorporate the representative views about issues concerning old age.

SURVEY FINDINGS

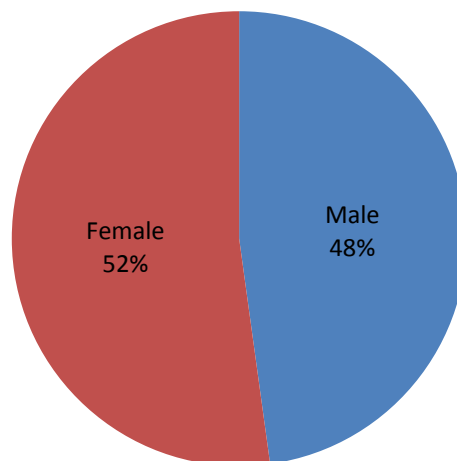
PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

- 87.2% of the respondents were from the age groups below 35 years. Only 12.8% respondents were above the age of 35 years.



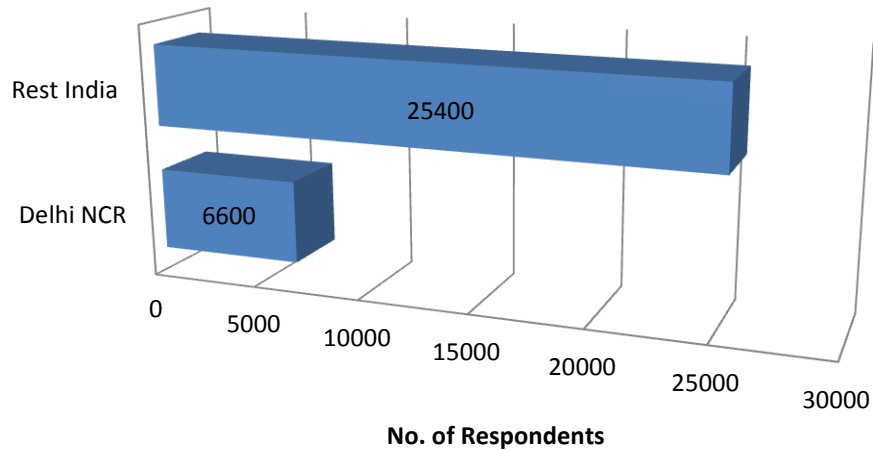
- 52% of the total 32100 respondents i.e. 16748 were female while remaining 47.8% respondents were male.

Gender Distribution



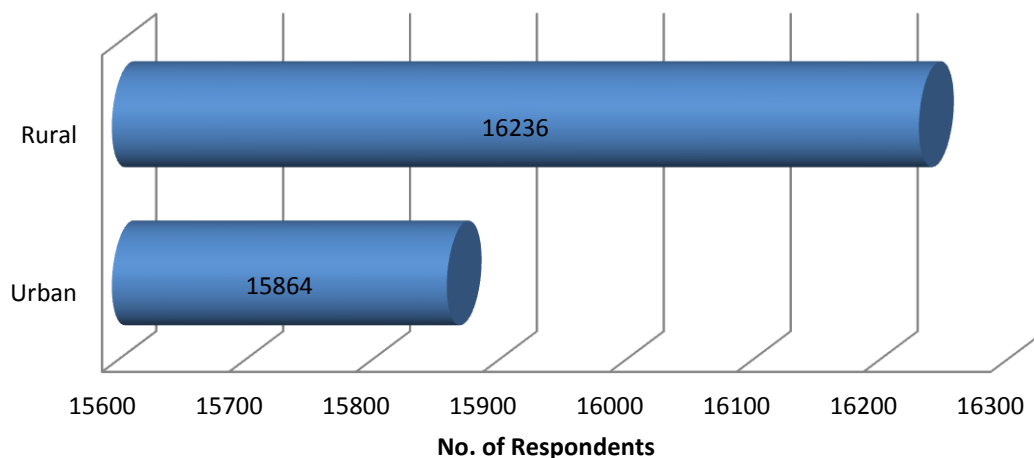
- Among the total 32100 respondents 79.4% respondents were from rest of India while 20.6% respondents were from Delhi & NCR.

Geographic Spread of Respondents



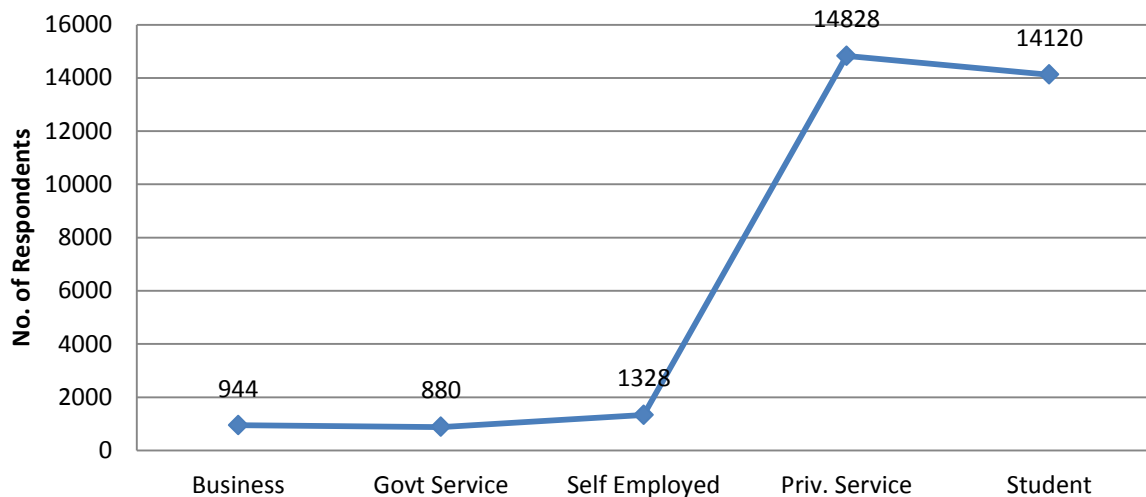
- When respondents were segregated residence wise, it was found that 49.4% respondents were from urban areas, while 50.6% respondents were from rural areas.

Area Distribution of Respondents



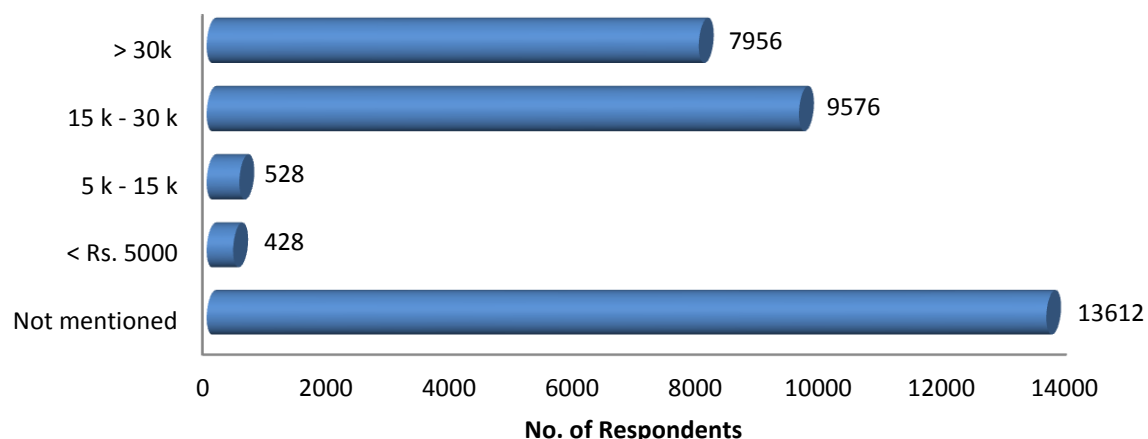
- 46.2% respondents were involved in various private sector jobs, while 44% respondents were students.
- 4.1% respondents were self-employed while 2.9% respondents were involved in business activities and remaining 2.7% respondents were in government jobs.

Professional Engagement Distribution



- Though 42.4% respondents did not disclose their monthly income, 29.8% of the total respondents were earning monthly income from Rs. 15000 to Rs. 30000 and 24.8% were earning Rs. 30000 per month.
- Only 1.3% respondents mentioned that they earn below Rs. 5000 per month.

Income Distribution of Respondents

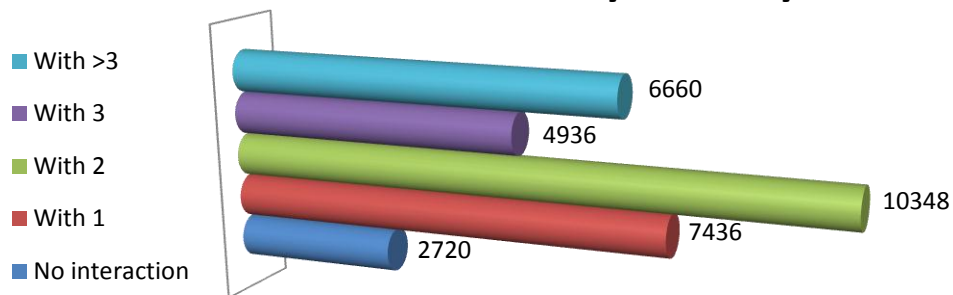


FINDINGS ON INTERACTION WITH THE ELDERLY

After exhaustive exercise of collection of data from 32100 respondents, research team analyzed and interpreted the data from different points of view.

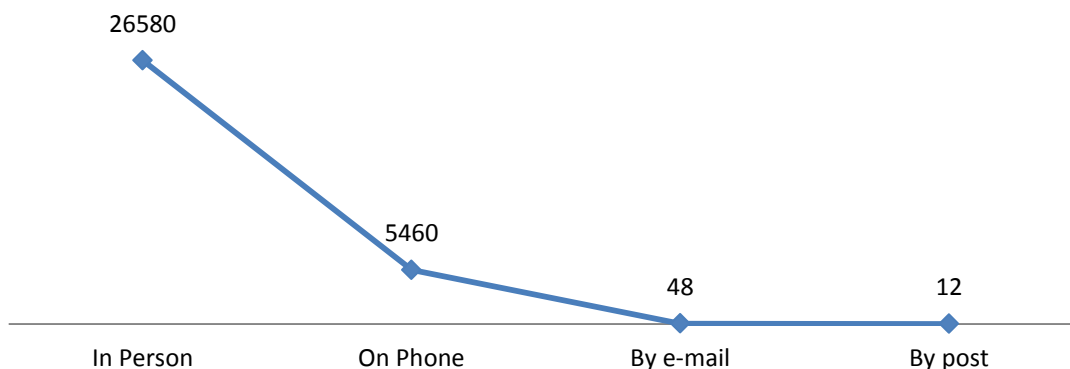
- 8.5% of the respondents (2720 out of 32100 respondents) did not interact with older persons on daily basis.
- 23.2% respondents interact with only 1 old person on daily basis while almost 1/3rd of the respondents (32.2%) interact with 2 old persons every day.
- 15.4% respondents admitted that they interact with 3 old people daily while 20.7% mentioned that they meet more than 3 older persons on daily basis.

Interaction With Elderly on Daily Basis



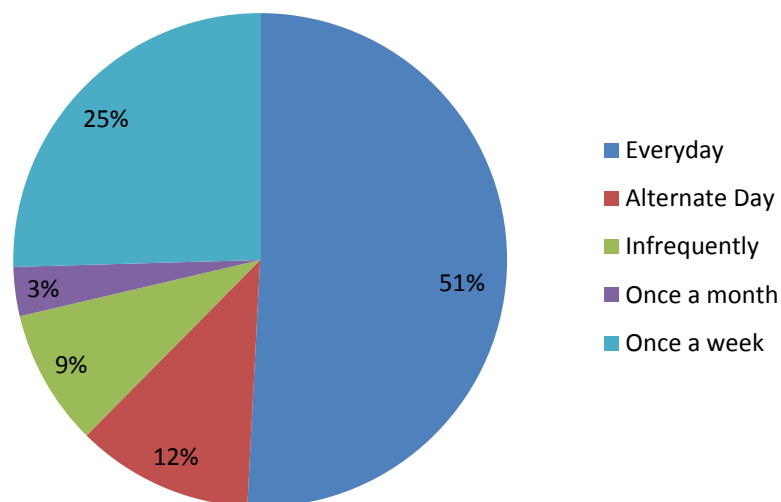
- When respondents were asked about their manner in which they interact with old people, it was found that 82.8% respondents i.e. 26580 out of 32100 respondents visit or meet older persons in person.
- Every 6th respondent i.e. 17% respondents interact with older persons through phone.
- Only 48 respondents admitted that they are in contact with older persons by e-mails, while just 12 out of total 32100 respondents said that they write letters to their elderly family members.

Manner of Interaction With Elderly



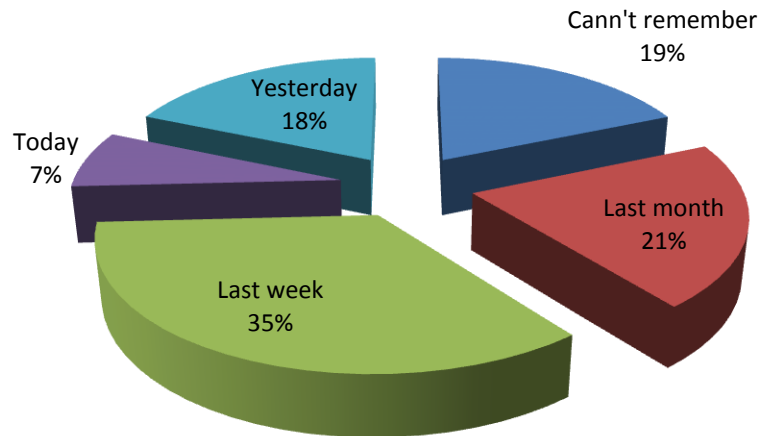
- Every second respondent i.e. 50.8 % respondents reportedly visit/meet older persons almost every day.
- 11.6% respondents admitted that they interact with older persons every alternate day.
- 8.9% respondents said that they don't visit older persons frequently, but interact with elderly quite often.
- Every fourth respondent i.e. 25.4% respondents interact with older persons on weekly basis. Most of them visit their elderly family members on weekends.
- 3.2% respondents reportedly interact with older persons on monthly basis.

Frequency of Interaction with Elderly



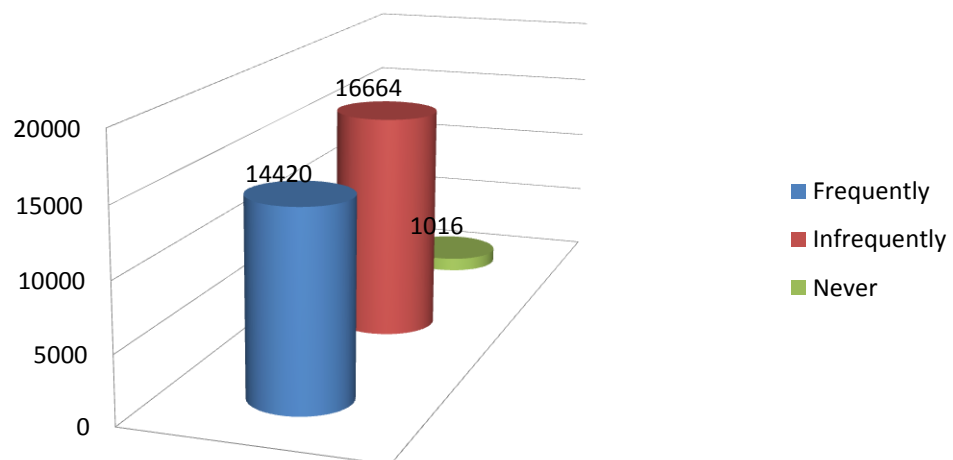
- When it was attempted to understand the level of interactions with older persons, it was found that almost 1/3rd respondents i.e. 11200 out of 32100 respondents had heart to heart interaction with older persons on weekly basis, preferably on weekends.
- 20.7% respondents accepted that they had warm interaction with older persons last month only.
- 18.6% said that they had good talk with older persons yesterday while only 7.2% respondents found having or to have heart to heart interaction with older persons on the same day.
- 18.6% respondents could not remember or they had no experience of any heart to heart talk with older persons.

Last Heart to Heart Interaction With Elderly



- According to survey data obtained by interviewers, 44.9% respondents seek advice from older people for various issues frequently. They reported sought advice from old people in issues pertaining to various issues like relationships, family matters, health, career, legal matters, etc.
- Almost half of the respondents said they seek advice from their elders and other old people infrequently. They sought help or advice from older persons only in critical situations.
- Only 3.2% respondents said that they never sought any advice from old people in their life so far.

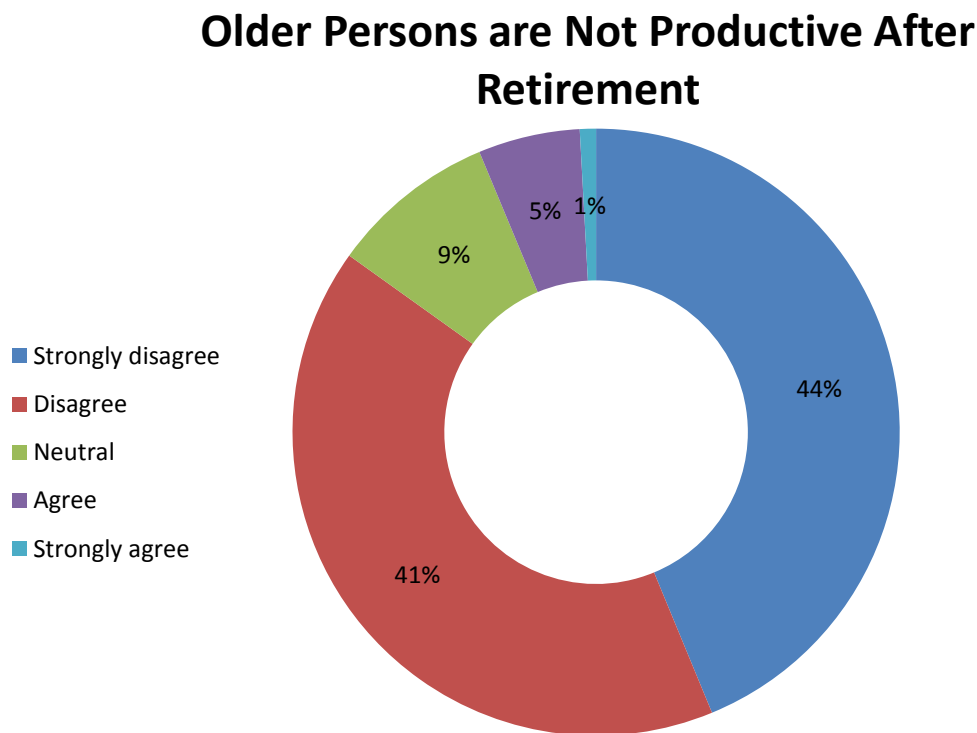
Seeking Advice from Old People



GENERAL PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS OLDER PERSONS

PERCEPTIONS ON POST RETIREMENT LIFE IN OLD AGE

- As per data collected during the survey, it was found that 84.9% respondents accept the fact that older persons are productive even after their retirement. Among these respondents 43.8% were found to strongly disagree with the perception that old people are not productive post retirement.
- Only 7.3% respondents were of the view that older persons are not productive post retirement or they could not earn money in old age. In this category only 0.9% respondents were found strongly agreed that old people are unproductive.

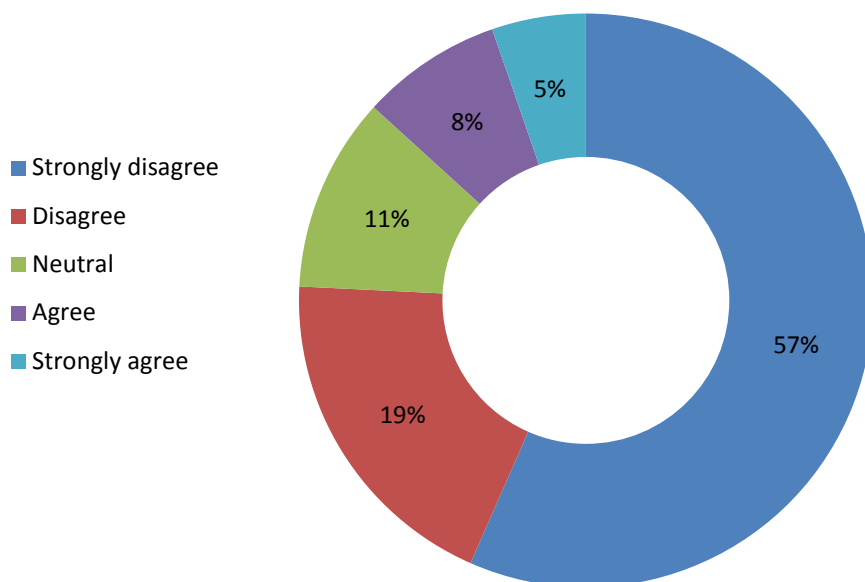


The fact that 85% of the respondents believe old people are productive post retirement goes to show the general mood of society. It vindicates the stand that retirement is superfluous and not restricted purely by age. With a keen mind, higher life expectancy and a cauldron of knowledge and experience under their belts, today's elderly generation is raring to go in the second innings of their life. Only a miniscule percentage of respondents genuinely believe that older persons may not be productive after retirement.

PERCEPTIONS ON STEREOTYPING ELDERLY

- When respondents were asked whether older persons were bracketed in the same category as disabled persons or drug addicts, more than a half (56.6%) respondents were found to strongly disagree while another 19.2% respondents were found to simply disagree with the statement.
- Only 13.3% respondents reportedly said that there is no problem with treating older persons as disabled or drug addicts from the social welfare point of view.
- 11% of the respondents were not sure about categorizing older persons in any specific category.

OLDER PERSONS ARE BRACKETED IN THE SAME CATEGORY AS DISABLED PERSONS OR DRUG ADDICTS

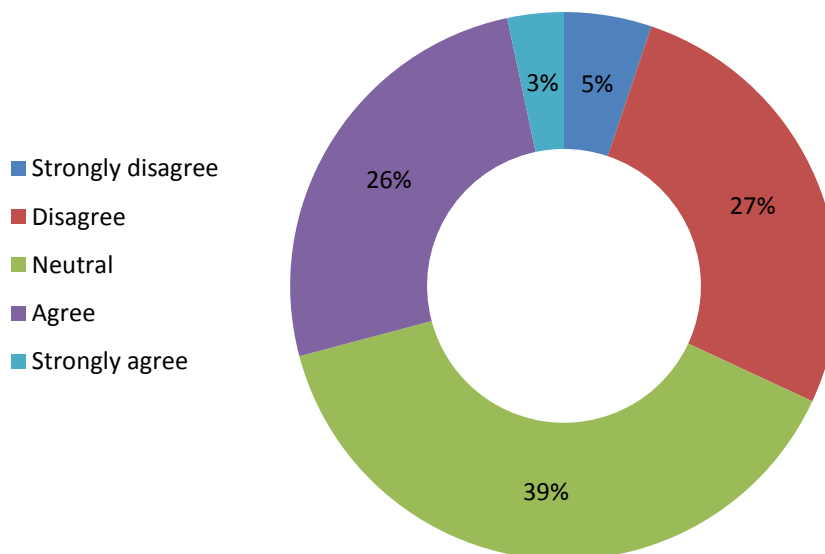


In a country where the elderly are categorized in sync with drug addicts and persons with disabilities, the concept of old age being celebrated as a natural phenomenon gets defeated. The elderly people around us are the same as all of us. More than 3/4th of the respondents believe that old people should not be bracketed in the same category as drug addicts. It is important to note this perception as it clearly questions the very premise of defining the elderly. Perhaps we need to revisit the parameters by which the policies governing the elderly have been instituted.

PERCEPTIONS ON SENSE OF INSECURITY FELT BY ELDERLY

- 38.9% respondents expressed their inability to understand sense of insecurity in old age. While 26.8% people admit that older persons don't have a misplaced sense of insecurity.
- 26.1% respondents reportedly said that there is a sense of insecurity in old age due to various reasons, while 3.3% respondents strongly agree with the fact that older persons have misplaced sense of insecurity.

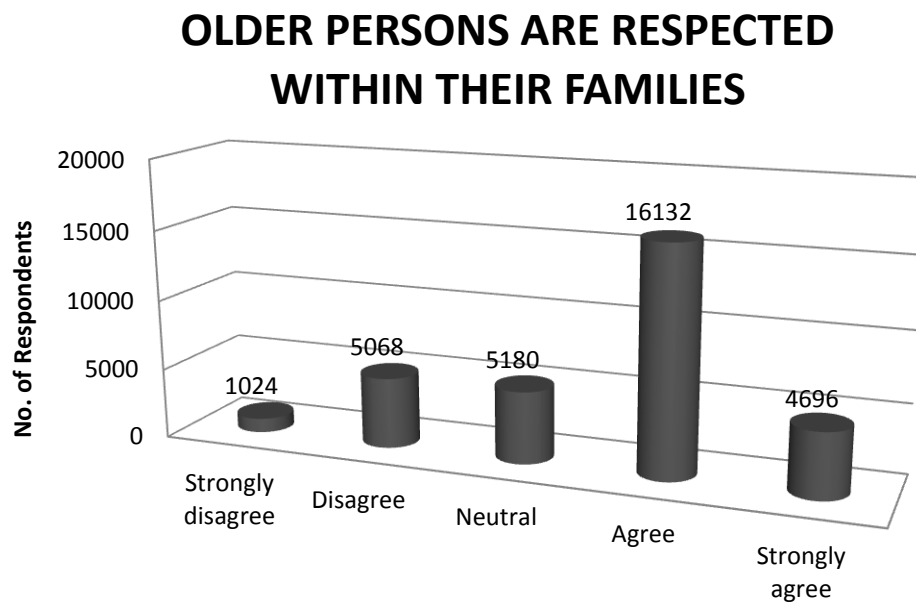
OLDER PERSONS HAVE A MISPLACED SENSE OF INSECURITY



The ever widening generation gap, our fast paced lives, advent of technology and just the missing human touch is leading to fissures in our social fabric that will have lasting imprints. For the elderly this would mean their own set of aspirations and expectations from their friends and family. When these expectations are not met, a sense of insecurity sets in. This insecurity may wear various masks but it exists nonetheless. The fact that only 5% strongly disagree with this perception and almost 40% cannot put a finger on it only goes to show the complexity and layered nature of this issue.

PERCEPTIONS ON RESPECT WITHIN THE FAMILY

- Almost half the respondents i.e. 16132 out of 32100 respondents from all age groups (50.3%) said that in their opinion, older persons are respected within their families.
- 19% respondents said that they don't agree with this fact that older persons are respected within their families, among this category 3.2% respondents i.e. 1024 out of total 32100 respondents said they strongly disagree with this fact.
- 16.1% respondents were found unable to make their clear opinion about this and they remained neutral.



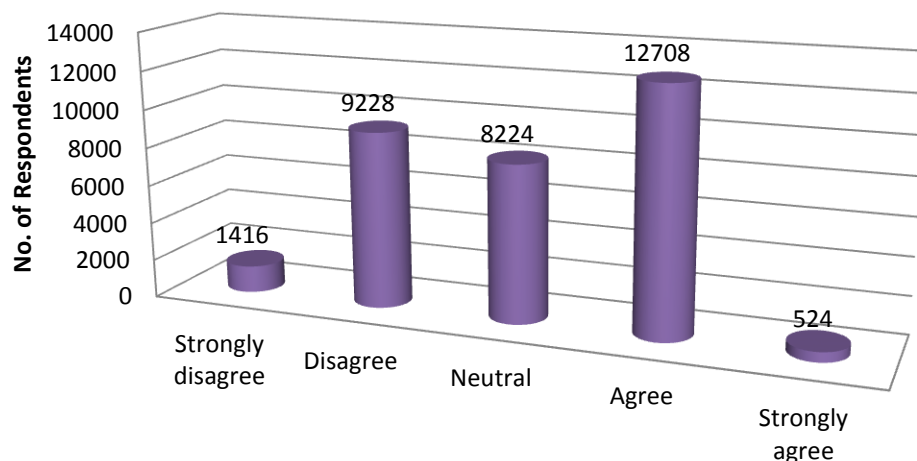
The rather complex question of respect for the elderly is even more protracted in a country like India where blessings of long life are common place. The manner in which the elderly are treated within the four walls of their own house may not necessarily coincide with the way society may treat them. Today's generation may completely ignore or sidestep an elderly person in their own homes, either deliberately or unknowingly, due to various factors but would bend backwards to show respect to the elderly in the neighborhood. While respect for the elderly is engrained in our system, the vagaries of daily life and pressures make us ignorant towards it in a way that is blatant for the elderly but unnoticeable to us. Almost a fourth of the respondents agreed that respect for the elderly is missing at home.

DISCRIMINATION OF OLDER PERSONS AT WORKPLACE

PERCEPTIONS ON DISCRIMINATION OF ELDERLY AT THE WORKPLACE

- 2/5th respondents i.e. 41.2% respondents said that older persons are discriminated at the workplace, when they go for any work in old age, among these respondents, 1.6% respondents were in strong agreement to age discrimination.
- Almost every third respondent i.e. 33.1% respondents see no discriminatory behavior with senior citizens when they go out of their houses for any work in old age.
- 25.6% respondents either have no idea about discrimination against older persons at the workplace and they remained neutral when they were asked about discrimination against older persons at the workplace.

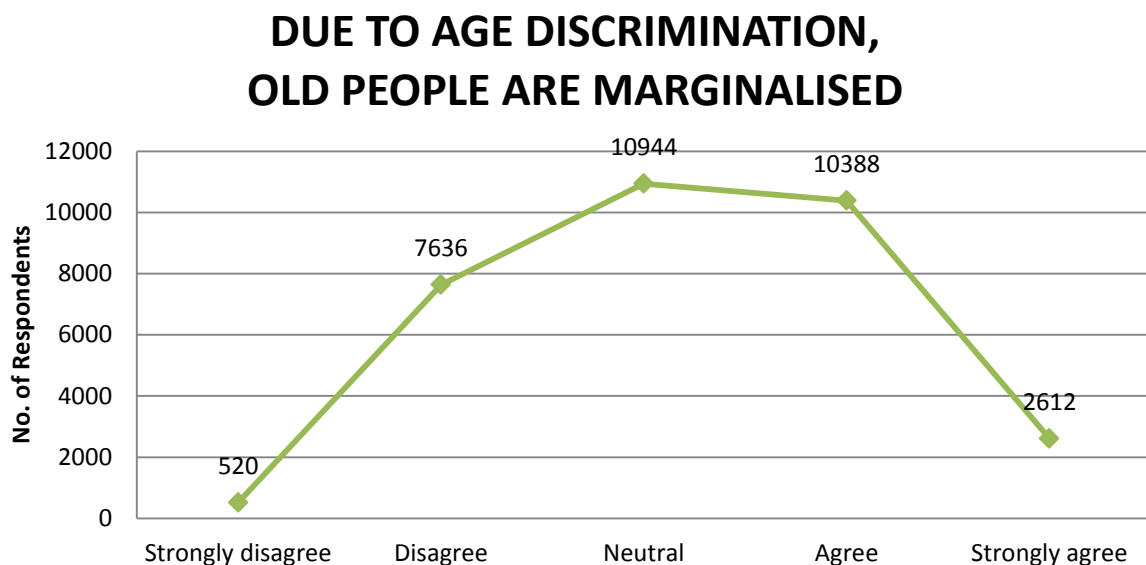
OLDER PERSONS ARE DISCRIMINATED AT THE WORKPLACE



The workplace is an integral part of our daily lives. How many times do we actively stop and think about the elderly working in our midst? One aspect of the issue pertains to older persons supervising us while another relates to colleagues or subordinates who are elderly. Are we comfortable working with them? Are they discriminated in any manner? What about older persons wanting to be productive after retirement? Is there discrimination in selection procedures? Would promotions be granted to an elderly person? Would any of these choices be made with a bias? A little less than half the respondents believe discrimination against the elderly at the workplace does exist.

PERCEPTIONS ON DISCRIMINATION BASED ON AGE

- 40.5% respondents i.e. 13000 respondents out of 32100 respondents interacted during the survey said that they agree that due to age discrimination, old people are marginalized in the society or family.
- Out of them, 1/4th respondents i.e. 2612 had strongly admitted that age discrimination is the main factor responsible for marginalization in old age.
- 1/4th of the total respondent i.e. 25.4% (8156 out of 32100) were against this viewpoint and they didn't agree that age discrimination and marginalization are two sides of the same coin.

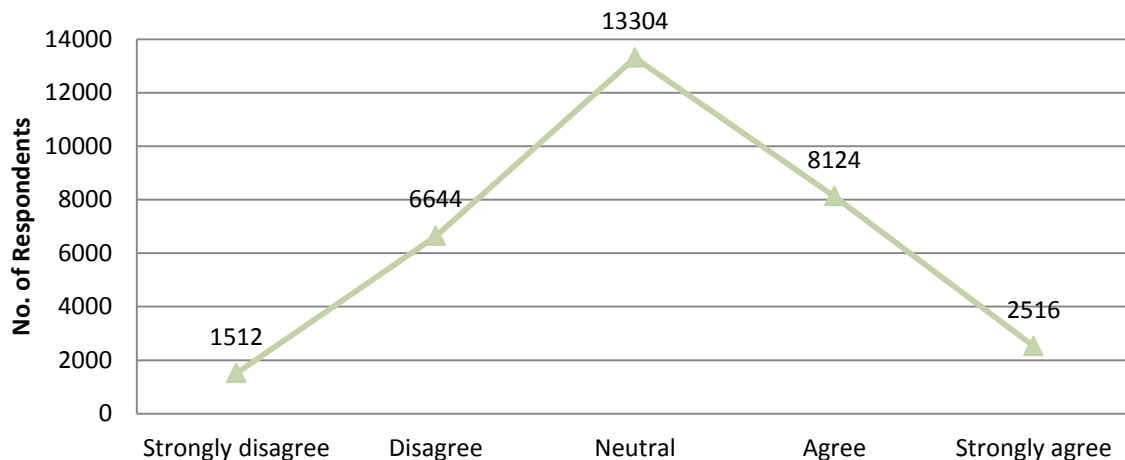


Older persons face discrimination due to their age at the workplace according to almost half the respondents. Promotions are curtailed or tasks reassigned. The concept of new blood and fresh thinking versus old school and conservative approaches is an ongoing debate. In the bargain most elder persons face discrimination at the workplace. This is not limited only to career progression but may also reflect in the way people interact at the inter-personal level as well. Therefore, at both a formal level as well as informally, the elderly do face discrimination in varying degrees. A section of the respondents also felt that discrimination at the workplace may not be due to age alone and it could be dependent on various other factors.

PERCEPTIONS ON ELDERLY SUPERVISORS IN THE WORKPLACE

- Almost 1/4th respondents don't prefer a young supervisor compared to an elder one. They would choose an elder supervisor given the choice.
- 1/3rd respondents said that if there is a need to appoint a supervisor they prefer younger people compared to an elder.
- 41.4% respondents prefer to remain neutral. Majority of them said that it depends on requirements and circumstances.

YOU WOULD PREFER A YOUNG SUPERVISOR COMPARED TO AN ELDER ONE



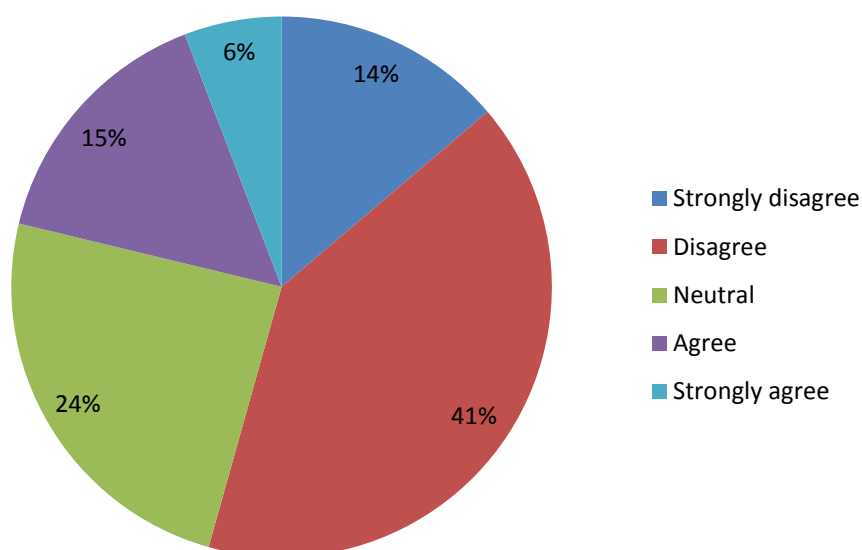
Most respondents feel a younger supervisor would be better at the job compared to an older one. This could be due to various reasons. One of them is the fact that younger supervisors are more open to new ideas and are in tune with current trends and technology while it may not be necessarily true for elderly supervisors. Also, an elderly supervisor may remain stringent and uptight and may not be as approachable as a younger one. The other set of respondents who feel elderly supervisors are better suited for the job argued that the elderly supervisors have all the necessary expertise, skillset and knowledge for the job.

FINANCIAL STATUS OF OLDER PERSONS

PERCEPTIONS ON GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY'S ROLE

- More than half the respondents i.e. 54.4% (17448 respondents out of 32100) reportedly said that our government or society does not support older person's right to earn income to a large extent. According to them, government policies and our social norms are not at par so far as financial security in old age is concerned.
- Out of total respondents 13.8% i.e. 4428 persons were found to strongly disagree with the fact that government/society support income generational jobs in old age.
- 24.4% respondents expressed their inability to respond when volunteers asked them about older person's right to earn money and remained neutral.
- Only 21.2% respondents claimed that our government and society is doing enough to protect older person's right to earn income.

OUR GOVERNMENT/SOCIETY SUPPORTS AN OLDER PERSON'S RIGHT TO EARN INCOME

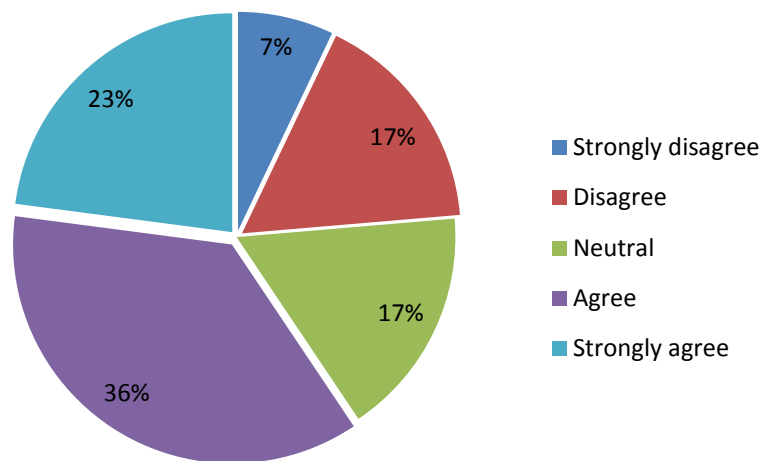


As in most developing nations, the thrust of most government aid is towards women empowerment, children, youth and environment. The elderly remain a marginalized lot in terms of financial rights. Income generating activities for the elderly are few and far between. Civil society has stepped in to make a difference, however a lot more needs to be done in order to secure right to income for the elderly. This is primarily why a majority of the respondents disagree with the statement that government and society supports older persons' right to earn income.

PERCEPTIONS ON FINANCIAL FRAUD AND THE ELDERLY

- Approx. 59.4% respondents admitted that older persons are prone to financial fraud by their family members and/or others (22.9% strongly agree & 36.5% agree).
- Only 23.7% respondents said that they are not prone to financial fraud as majority of older persons are not financially well.
- 16.9% older persons reportedly remained neutral and expressed no clear view about the subject.

OLDER PERSONS ARE PRONE TO FINANCIAL FRAUD

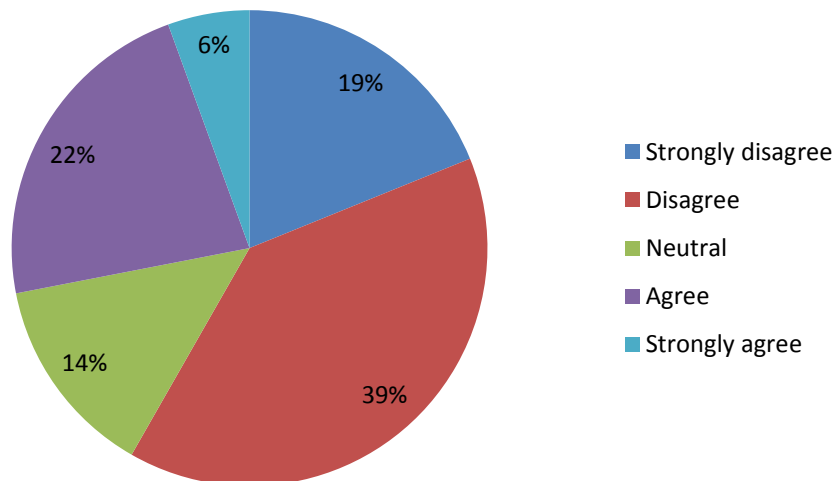


With huge advances in technology, changes in regulation and paucity of time, a large section of the elderly population remains unaware of the financial risks they might be faced with. Hence, they become easy targets for financial fraud. Almost 60% of the respondents agree that financial fraud is highly plausible with the elderly. This is a serious gap that needs to be covered in order to safeguard the interests of the elderly. Investor education, financial literacy and proper guidance systems are required to make the situation better.

PERCEPTIONS ON FINANCIAL SECURITY IN OLD AGE

- 58.3% respondents i.e. 18700 out of total 32100 respondents were found to disagree with the fact that in India, people have financial security in old age. Out of them 6056 respondents (18.9% of the total respondents) had strong reservations to this fact.
- Only 28% respondents said that there is good level of financial security in old age in India. 13.7% respondents have no idea about the financial security in old age and governmental schemes for financial security in old age.

IN INDIA, PEOPLE HAVE FINANCIAL SECURITY IN OLD AGE

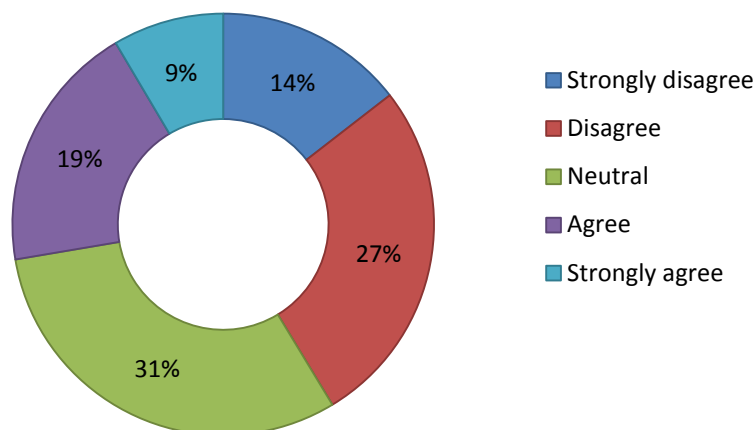


The concept of investment and savings for old age is always in the back of the mind for the average urban Indian, however, very few of us actually start actively securing our old age financially. This is an issue that needs to be addressed at a much earlier stage. People in their youth need to be motivated to save for their retirement. This initiative should permeate the school curricula itself in order to inculcate behavioral change in people and help them make conscious choices to save actively for their retirement. Almost 60% of the respondents feel there is no financial security in old age.

PERCEPTIONS ON POST RETIREMENT FINANCIAL STABILITY

- 27.7% respondents i.e. 8880 out of total 32100 respondents agreed that older persons should fend for themselves financially post retirement. Out of them 2832 strongly advocated to financial independence in old age so that they could meet their expenses.
- 41.3% respondents said that they are against the concept of post retirement engagement in income generational activities; among these 13268 respondents 4656 respondents said that they are strongly against post retirement work.
- As per 31% respondents it should not matter in old age, whether they should be engaged in financial activities or not, hence they remained neutral to this issue.

OLDER PERSONS SHOULD FEND FOR THEMSELVES FINANCIALLY POST RETIREMENT.

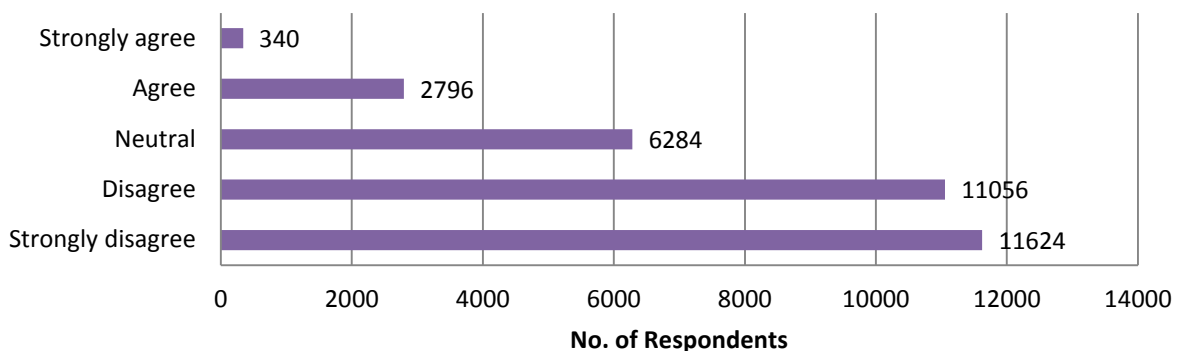


A lot has been discussed on this particular aspect of old age. Who will take care of an elderly person? Will it be close friends and family? Children? Society? Or the Government? A large section of respondents remained neutral on this statement primarily because this is a highly debatable issue. However, analyzing existing trends, the breakup of the joint family system and various other factors, it is more than evident that the elderly have to fend for themselves, post retirement in most cases. Children do not have the time or inclination or both in some cases to take care of their elders post retirement. The government cannot take up the burden of financing such a large group of people. The most feasible and logical option left for the elderly is to fend for themselves by way of securing financial and economic stability during their productive years. Another big issue faced by the elderly is of wills and loss of property. All assets belonging to the elderly should be retained by them till death in order to have some form of security in hand after retirement.

PERCEPTIONS ON SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEMES FOR ELDERLY

- According to 70.7% respondents (22680 out of 32100 respondents) were found to be dissatisfied with the status of social security schemes for old people in India like old age pension, etc. (36.2% strongly dissatisfied & 34.4% dissatisfied).
- Only 9.8% respondents reportedly claimed that social security schemes being run by central/state government are quite adequate.
- 19.6% respondents i.e. 6284 out of 32100 respondents didn't respond as they have no or less idea about social security schemes for old people in India.

SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEMES FOR OLD PEOPLE IN INDIA LIKE OLD AGE PENSION, ETC. ARE SATISFACTORY



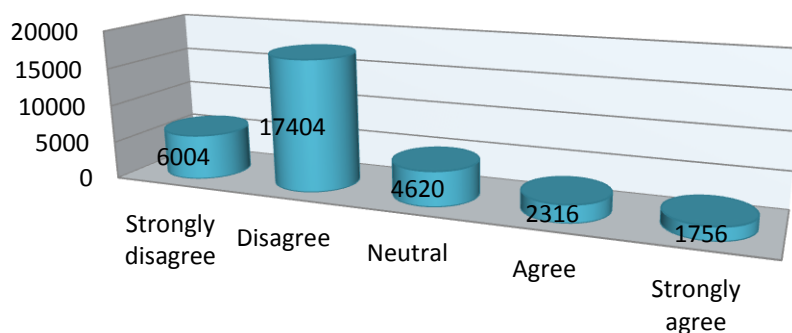
The general mood of people towards government policies is that of suspicion and pessimism. The same reflects in this case as well. A majority of respondents believe that the social security schemes for the elderly are not enough. The government is struggling to keep the economy alive and cannot dole out freebies for the elderly. Voluntary contributions towards one's own retirement corpus are the best way forward for old age income security. The government pension schemes have not fared well primarily due to lack of knowledge, leakages and lack of accountability.

LEGAL RIGHTS OF OLDER PERSONS

PERCEPTIONS ON LEGAL PROVISIONS FOR OLDER PERSONS

- Only 5.5% respondents i.e. 1756 out of 32100 respondents interacted during the survey, said that they are aware of legal provisions for older persons in India to a great extent, while 2316 respondents i.e. 7.2% respondents have some knowledge of legal provisions for older persons.
- Almost 3/4th respondents (approximately 72.9%) strongly disagreed with the fact that awareness level of general public about legal provisions and rights of older persons is higher.
- 14.4% respondents simply have no or less knowledge of status of awareness about elderly legal rights and provisions in the country.

I AM WELL AWARE OF LEGAL PROVISIONS FOR OLDER PERSONS IN MY COUNTRY

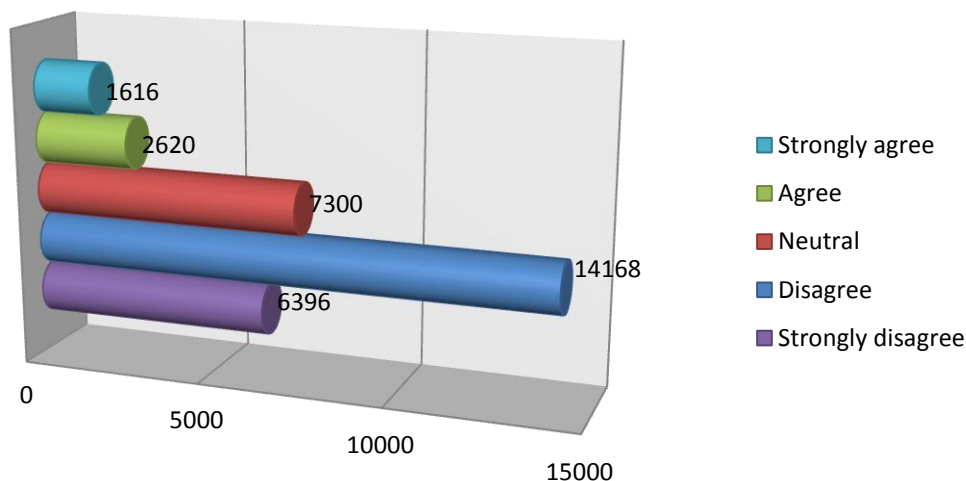


Most respondents were ignorant of existing legal provisions for the elderly. While some legislation exists for safeguarding the rights of the elderly, not too many people are aware of them. And while on paper certain provisions are available, in a traditional society like India, most cases pertaining to the elderly go unreported and never reach a formal legal space for resolution. The social stigma attached to anything related to the police or courts is too deeply entrenched especially within the earlier generations to take any proactive steps for resolution. However, the situation is bound to improve as more and more people are made aware of the existing mechanisms in place for securing the rights of the elderly.

PERCEPTIONS ON LEGAL SECURITY IN OLD AGE

- Only 5% respondents admitted strongly that in India the law is strong and ensures a secure old age for all. Another 8.2% said that they can say our law is strong enough to protect older persons and safeguard their rights.
- Almost 2/3rd respondents (approximately 64.1% i.e. 20564 persons out of 32100 respondents) opined that they see no strong law and order status in practice when older persons are in need of help.
- 22.7% respondents said that they are neutral to the fact that our law is strong enough to protect human rights of senior citizens.

THE LAW IS STRONG AND ENSURES A SECURE OLD AGE FOR ALL

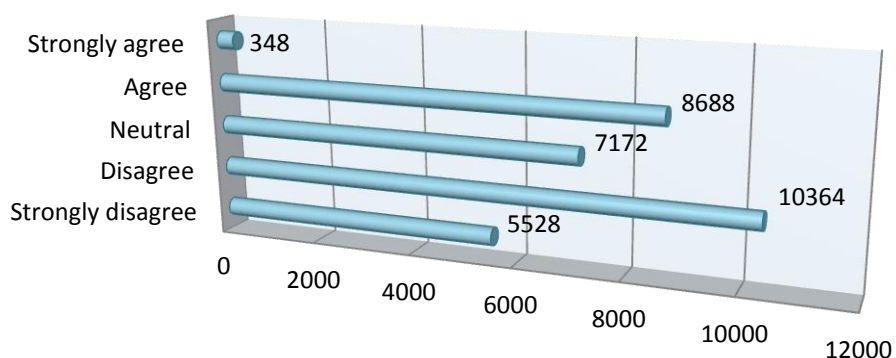


A large section of respondents clearly disagree to the statement that law is strong and ensures a secure old age for all. As the largest democracy in the world with one of the largest populations in the world, the current system is unable to cope with the specific needs and rights of the elderly in a structured manner. The laws available are weak and impractical. This is primary reason for a majority of respondents to feel that the law is lacking.

PERCEPTIONS ON POLICE SENSITIVITY TOWARDS ELDERLY

- About half of the respondents (49.5%) reportedly admitted that local police is not sensitive towards older persons and issues concerning old age. 17.2% respondents were found very dissatisfied with the role of local police so far as older people are concerned, while 32.3% respondents said that local police does not deal with old age issues sensitively.
- 28.1% respondents agree that local police in India takes care of older persons and looks after their cases seriously.

LOCAL POLICE IS SENSITIVE TOWARDS OLDER PERSONS

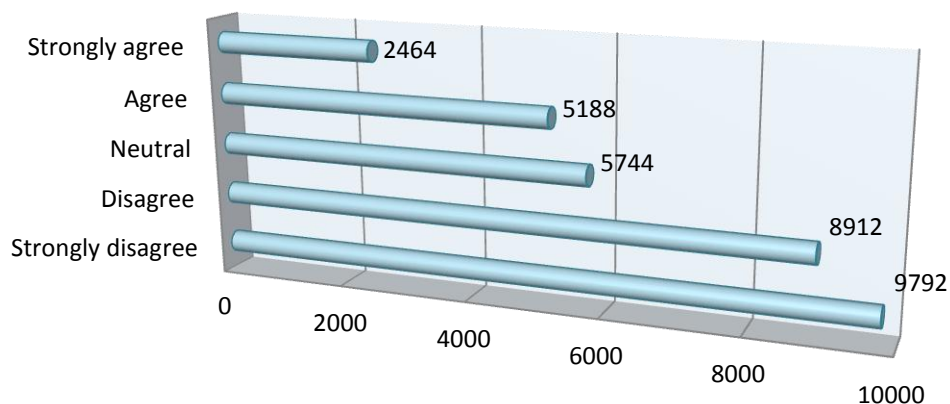


The general perception of the respondents towards police sensitivity towards elderly is negative. As the police in most cases lack the soft skills necessary for dealing with the elderly, a lot remains to be done to ensure that the elderly can safely turn to the police if any of their rights are being violated. Agewell Foundation is working closely with police personnel to sensitize and train them for dealing with the elderly.

PERCEPTIONS ON FAITH IN JUDICIAL SYSTEM

- According to 58.3% respondents i.e. 18704 out of 32100 respondents have no faith in judicial system. They said that older persons could not depend on judicial system for timely justice.
- 30.5% respondents strongly disagreed while 27.8% respondents were in disagreement.
- Only 7.7% respondents said that judicial system is reliable and it can protect older persons' rights and interests as well. Another 16.2% respondents were also found hopeful towards functioning of judicial system to some extent.

OLD PEOPLE HAVE FAITH IN JUDICIAL SYSTEM FOR TIMELY JUSTICE

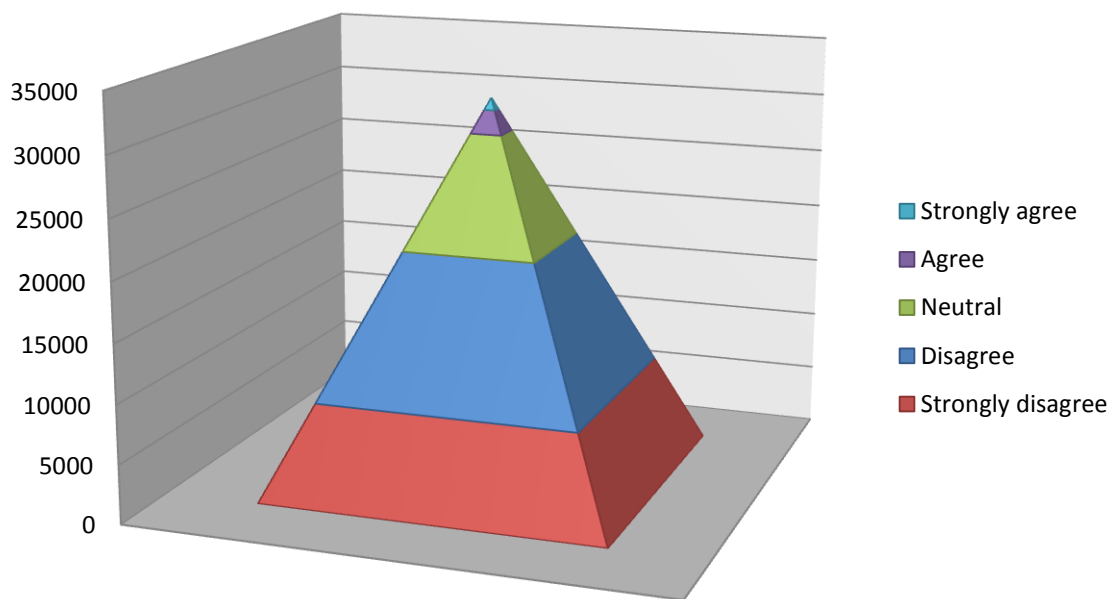


A major reason for respondents to lack faith in the legal system is the legal system itself. Due to the large quantity of cases pending in the courts, justice delayed is justice denied for most. All these factors coupled together present a strong case for most respondents believing the law is not strong for a secure old age for all and that judicial system is incapable of providing timely justice. Invariably, older persons find it hard to approach courts for filing cases as they are well aware that the outcome of the case may come through much after their demise.

PERCEPTIONS ON PRIORITIZING LEGAL CASES FOR ELDERLY

- Only 8.9% respondents admitted that our legal system prioritizes cases of older persons practically keeping in view of their old age.
- Remaining 91.1% i.e. 29244 respondents out of 32100 respondents were found not satisfied with the functioning of legal system or have no knowledge about functioning of courts.

OUR LEGAL SYSTEM PRIORITISES CASES OF OLDER PERSONS PRACTICALLY



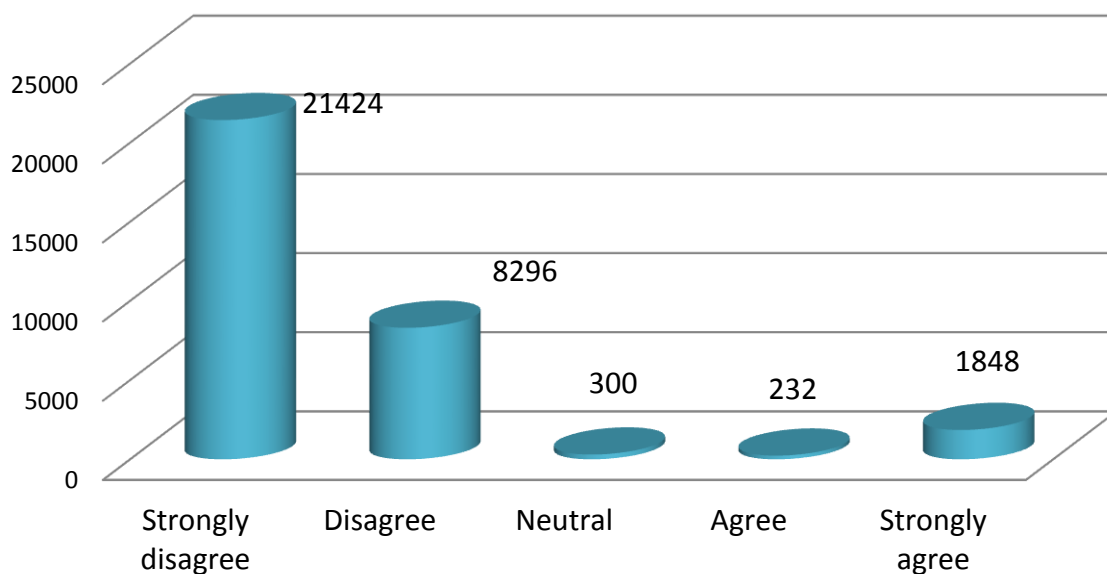
Although the government is working towards improving the efficiency of the courts, a lot more needs to be done to ensure speedy justice for the elderly. Unlike others, age is not on their side and while most cases takes years to come to a conclusion, the elderly may never benefit from justice as they would not survive till the completion. Certain days have been designated and fast track courts created for speedy disposal of cases. This may help to a certain extent but its clearly not enough. This is mainly why most respondents feel the legal system is not prioritizing cases of the elderly.

MEDICAL RIGHTS OF OLDER PERSONS

PERCEPTIONS ON HEALTH INSURANCE BEYOND 60

- According to 92.6 % respondents, insurance is important beyond the age of 60 and there should be provisions for health insurance of older persons in the country

HEALTH INSURANCE IS NOT IMPORTANT IN OLD AGE

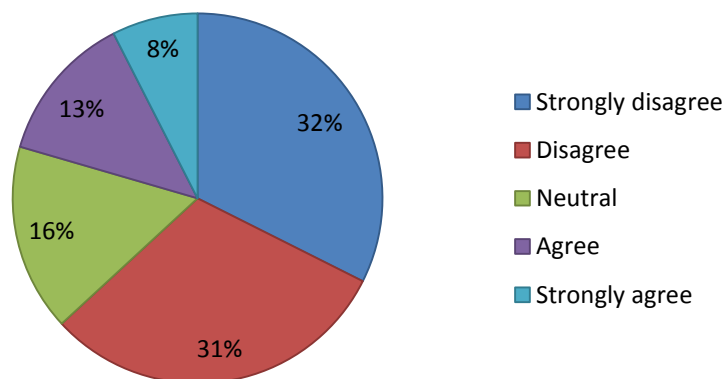


Health insurance for the elderly is a hot topic of debate. Most people beyond 50 find it difficult to get health insurance. Do they not deserve it? With life expectancy going up, an elder person is expected to live another 20 to 25 years beyond the age of 60. This may be higher for women as compared to men. Yet, health insurance is not provided for the elderly.

PERCEPTIONS ON MEDICAL TREATMENT FOR ELDERLY

- Only 1/5th respondents reportedly admitted that it is easy and convenient for older people to undergo treatment and checkups at various hospitals and clinics in our country.
- 63.1% respondents said that medical checkups and treatment in old age is a difficult task. 32.4% respondents said that it's too difficult for old people to undergo treatment and checkups at health centres.
- 16.4% respondents have not much idea about medical problems of older people hence they remained neutral and didn't express their clear cut views on the subject.

IT IS EASY AND CONVENIENT FOR OLDER PEOPLE TO UNDERGO TREATMENT AND CHECKUPS AT HEALTH INSTITUTIONS IN OUR COUNTRY

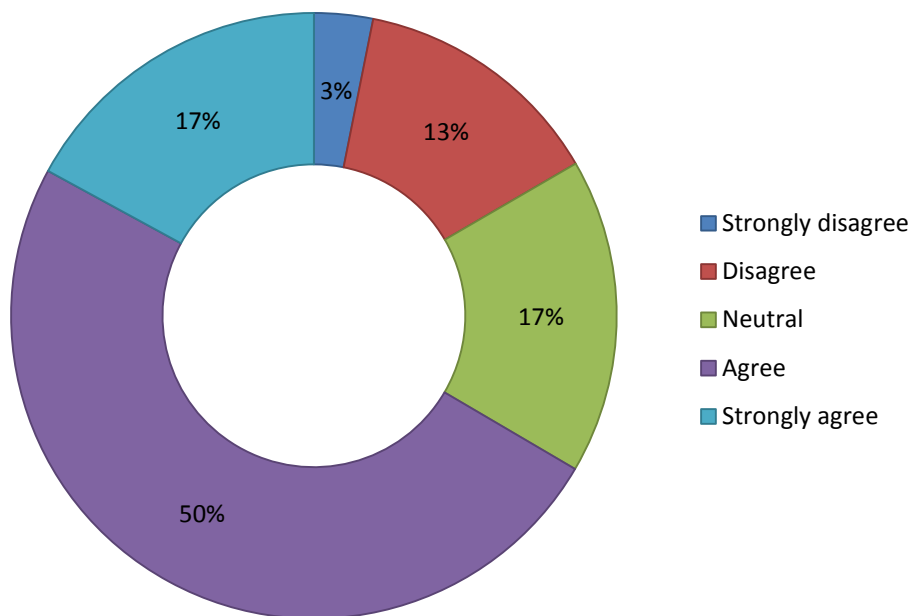


The state of hospitals and clinics across the country is not standardized. While in urban India with the right kind of resources an elderly person can get good healthcare facilities the same is not the case for a majority of the population as the infrastructure and sensitivity towards older persons is lacking on the medical front. Coupled with the already existing medical issues for older persons, lack of infrastructure and sensitization of hospital staff and clinics towards the elderly is one of the main reasons why so many respondents have vehemently disagreed with the statement.

PERCEPTIONS ON OLDER PERSONS' MEDICAL EXPENSES

- Almost 2/3rd respondents i.e. 66.6% respondents agreed that older persons have to depend upon their family members for medical expenses.
- 16.6% respondents were not agreed that old people have to depend upon their family members for medical expenses.

OLDER PERSONS HAVE TO DEPEND UPON THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS FOR MEDICAL EXPENSES

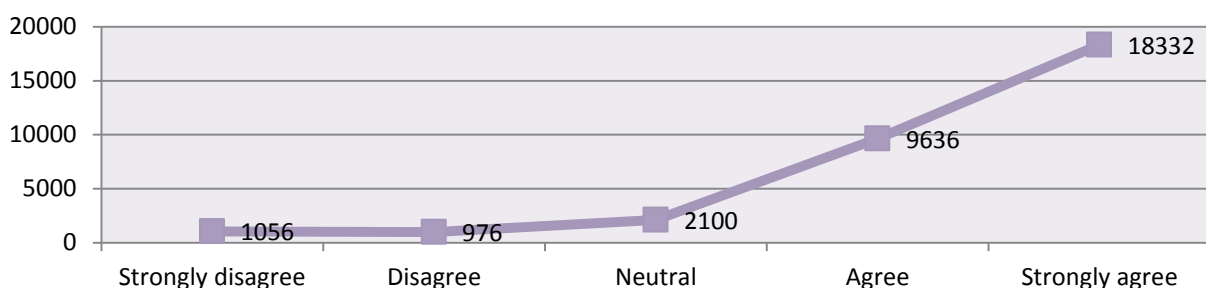


With lack of financial security in old age, most elderly persons are dependent on family for basic needs let alone medical bills. This is a fundamental issues faced by the society today.

PERCEPTIONS ON ELDERLY PARTICIPATION IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

- 87.1% respondents were found of the view that older persons should be involved in socio-economic activities to keep them active and healthy.
- Only 6.3% respondents were disagreed and said that old people can also be involved in activities other than socio-economic activities.

OLDER PERSONS SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES



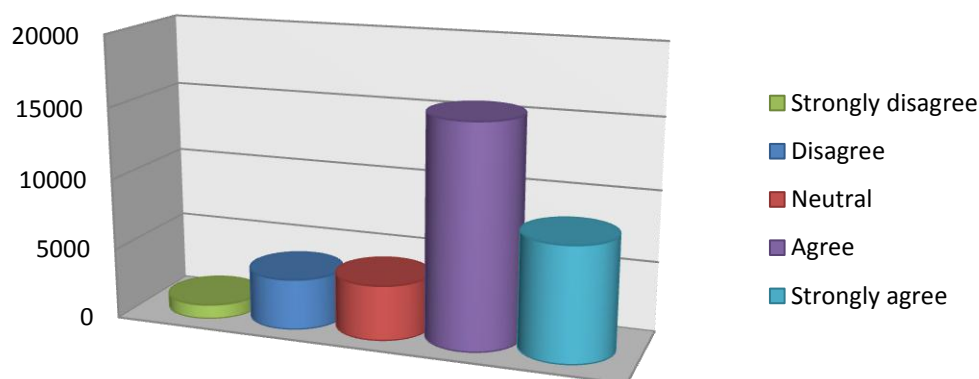
It is important for the elderly to be engaged in some activity or the other after retirement. As the elderly start getting marginalized within the four walls of their own homes, they find happiness in solace in activities that keep them occupied. One of the reasons why the elderly population is one of the largest active voters in the country is precisely due to this reason. Voting gives them an opportunity to assert themselves in a society where they are slowly being marginalized and pushed to the sidelines.

SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE OF OLDER PERSONS

PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS OLDER WOMEN AND THEIR DEPENDENCE ON THE FAMILY

- According to 73.5% respondents (48.4% agree, 25.1% strongly agree) older women are entirely dependent on family support for sustenance as they have no/minimal income.
- Only 3.2% respondents contradict the view that older women are dependent on family.

OLDER WOMEN ARE ENTIRELY DEPENDENT ON FAMILY

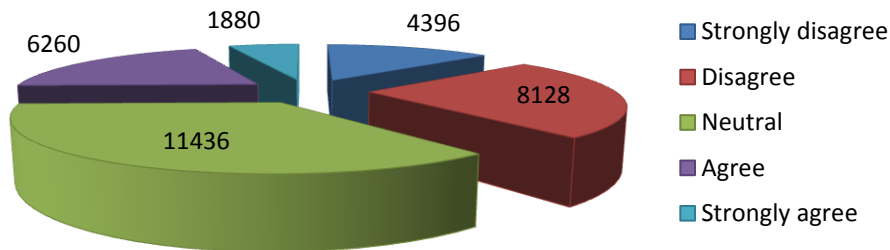


Most elderly women have invested their entire lifetime in home making. In the bargain, they have no financial resources to take care of themselves in their old age. Their investment is in their children and their husbands. It is believed traditionally that this is the right thing to do for them and hence out of compulsion they are dependent on others during their old age. This is a scenario which needs to change and women need to be encouraged to be an integral element of the participatory process. They should be allowed ample opportunities to generate income and save for their old age.

PERCEPTIONS ON POSITION OF OLDER MEN IN THE FAMILY

- 1/4th respondents i.e. 8140 out of 32100 respondents said that older men are considered a burden on the family post retirement while 39% respondents reportedly admitted that older men are not burden.

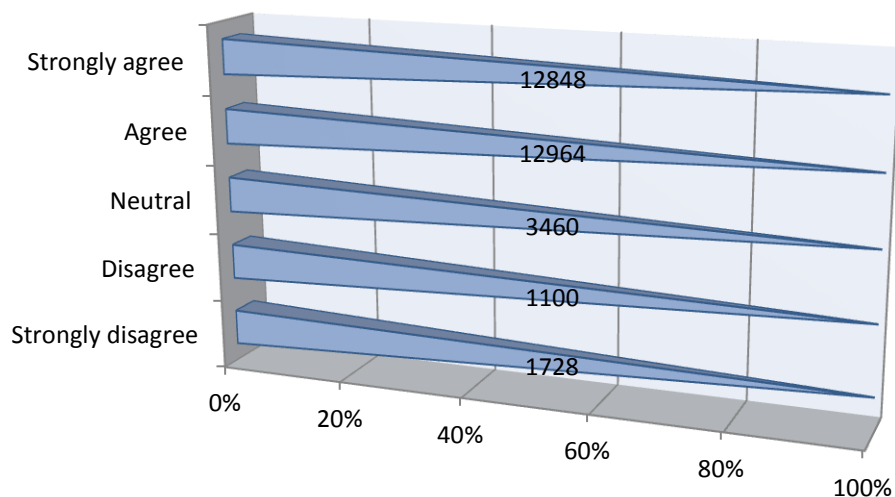
OLDER MEN ARE CONSIDERED A BURDEN ON THE FAMILY POST RETIREMENT



PERCEPTIONS ON EXPERIENCE, KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS OF OLDER PERSONS

- 80.4% respondents (40.4% agree and 40% strongly agree) see older persons as rich source of experience, knowledge and skills.
- Only 8.8% respondents were found disagreed with the view that old people are good human resource.
- 10.8% respondents could not conclude their opinion clearly and prefer to remain neutral.

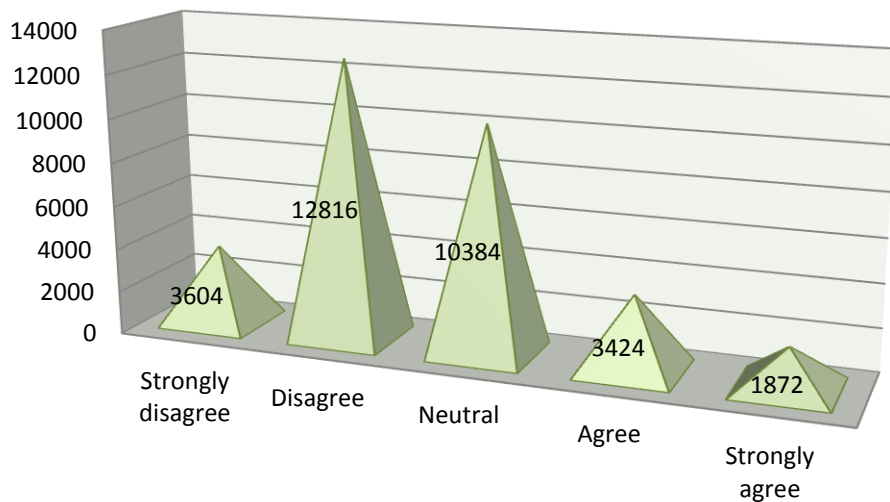
OLDER PERSONS ARE RICH IN EXPERIENCE, KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS



PERCEPTIONS ON OLDER PERSONS CHOICE OF LIVING ALONE

- As per respondents, majority of older persons don't prefer to live alone due to their respective family matters. 51.2% respondents said that old people like to live in family. 11.2% respondents were strongly disagreed with the fact that old people prefer to live alone while 39.9% were simply disagreed with this fact.
- Only 16.5% respondents said that old people prefer to live alone in comparison to live in joint /extended families.

OLDER PERSONS PREFER TO LIVE ALONE DUE TO FAMILY MATTERS



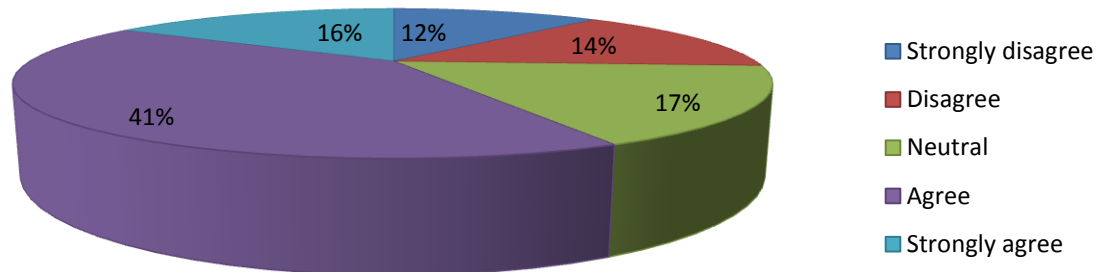
It is ironic that a majority of respondents feel old persons are a rich source of experience knowledge and skills yet they are deprived of their basic rights as human beings on most counts. Older men are resigned to the sidelines after retirement as the next generation takes over while the older women are left dependent on others. The contradictions run deeper when we realize that common perceptions are that older people like to stay with their families. The question is whether this is out of choice or compulsion?

ELDER ABUSE

PERCEPTIONS ON ELDER ABUSE

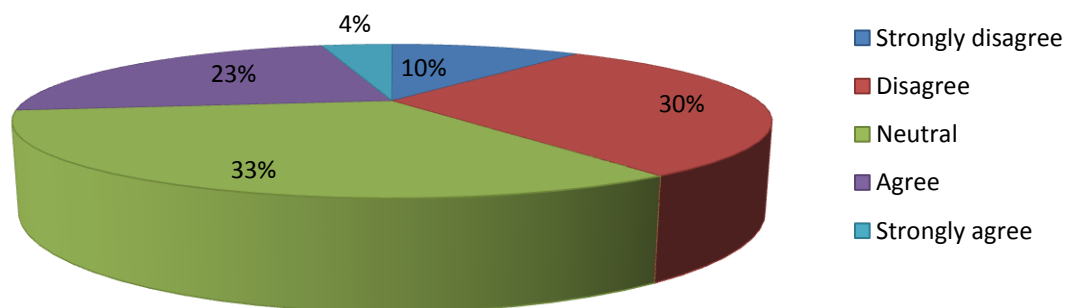
- 57.3% respondents admitted that they have seen older persons being abused either emotionally or physically. 16.3% respondents agreed strongly while 41% were simply agreed.
- Only 27.1% respondents said that older persons are genuinely revered in the family/society and do not face any abuse. Only 3.9% respondents claimed that old people are most revered family members while 23.2% people witnessed old people being respected in old age.

I HAVE SEEN AN OLDER PERSON BEING ABUSED EITHER EMOTIONALLY OR PHYSICALLY



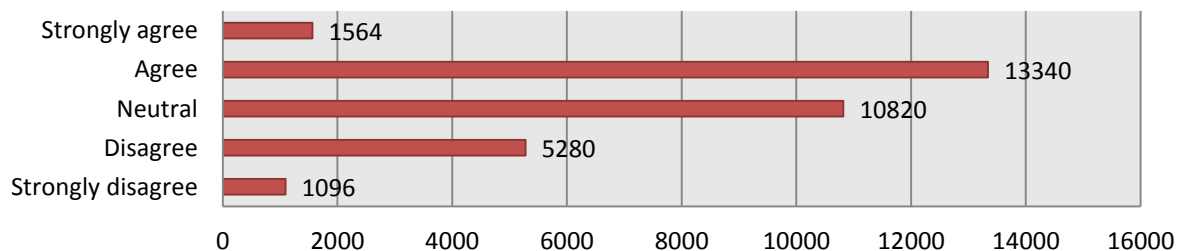
- Almost half of the respondents i.e. 50.3% (16152 out of 32100 respondents) agree that older people compromise and don't complain about elder abuse.
- 21.2% respondents are not agreed with the perception that people compromise with circumstances in old age due to various reasons.

OLDER PERONS ARE GENUINELY REVERED IN THE FAMILY AND DO NOT FACE ANY ABUSE



- 46.4% respondents i.e. 14904 respondents from all age groups admitted that older persons, particularly older women are exploited by their family members due to their dependence on them.
- 19.9% respondents think otherwise and said that older women are not exploited by their family members.

OLDER PERSONS, PARTICULARLY OLDER WOMEN ARE EXPLOITED BY THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS DUE TO THEIR DEPENDENCE ON THEM

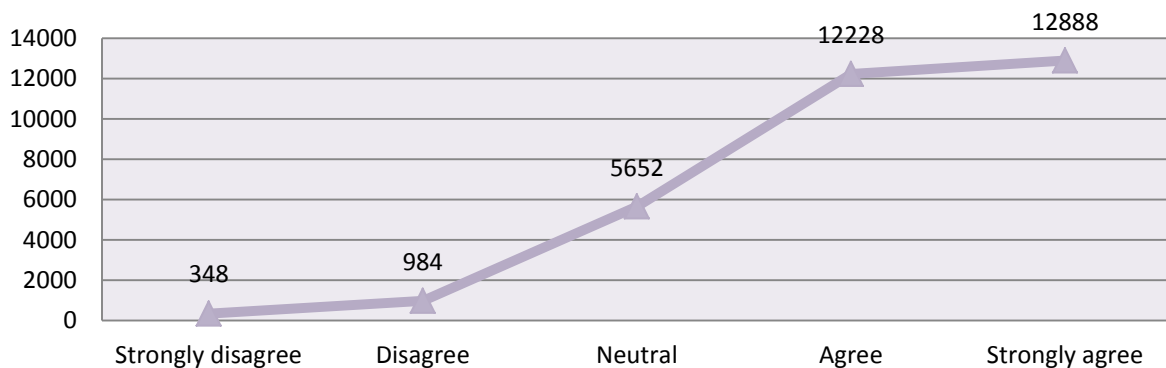


More than half the respondents have seen an older person being abused. A majority of them also agree that most of the older persons, especially women who are exploited due to their sheer dependence on others for survival, never complain. This is a reflection of deeply fissured our society is and how far and wide traditional value systems run. No parent would want to step up against his or her own child. No older person would compulsorily step out of the comfort zone of his family. A very miniscule number of elderly stand up for their rights and this is the scenario that needs to change.

IMPORTANCE OF OLDER PERSONS IN LIFE

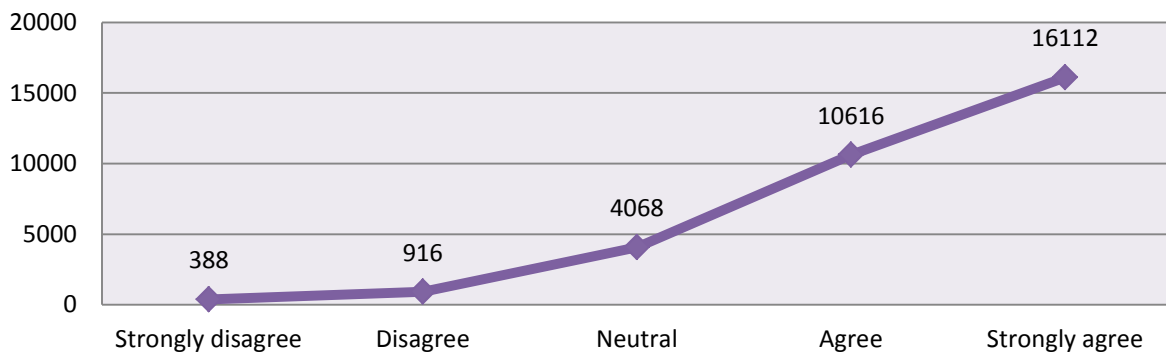
- 59.3% respondents i.e. 19028 out of 32100 respondents reportedly mentioned that there is a contradiction in the way people perceive older persons socially and at home. Whereas socially, older people are given respect but at home they are not considered important.
- Only 14% respondents opined that there is no such contradiction and situation of older persons remains the same.
- 26.8% respondents find it difficult to rank their opinion and remained neutral.
- As per survey data, 78.2% respondents do not mind living with an older person as a part of my family. 40.1% respondents advocated strongly in favour of older person as family member.
- Only 4.1% respondents did not want to live older persons as their family member.

I DO NOT MIND LIVING WITH AN OLDER PERSON AS A PART OF MY FAMILY



- 83.3% respondents (26728 out of 32100 respondents) admitted that company of older persons is good for all round development of children.
- Only 4.1% respondents don't find older people company good for children.

COMPANY OF OLD PEOPLE IS GOOD FOR CHILDREN



REPRESENTATIVE STATEMENTS

"I wanted to live my grandparents, but my job doesn't allow me to do so. They live in our ancestral home and my father migrated to town many years back. We used to visit them when we were young, but now it has become very difficult for us to meet them, even on weekends."

Pradeep Shukla, 27, Ashok Vihar, New Delhi

"I live in a joint family of seven family members including my grandparents, but I hardly interact with my grandparents, as I have to leave my home early in the morning and return back late night. Only on weekends I find time to have good talk with them."

Aman Iqbal, 46, Mumbai

"We have been shifted to Gurgaon for maintain our business and now my old grandparents are left behind to live alone in village. Since they find it quite difficult to adjust in urban setup, we are unable to offer them family support."

Sumati Jaiswal, 23, Gurgaon

"My aunt is very old, she is bedridden for past 5 years. Due to limited monthly income it has become difficult for me to look after her medical needs. Sometime she seems to be burden on our family."

Sudeep Ghosh, 56, Bangalore

"I have been witnessing mistreatment with my grandmother since my childhood. My mother never respected her and treated her as extra responsibility. My grandma is now used to live in such situations and don't complain ever."

Sukhbir Singh, 36, Chandigarh

CONCLUSION

Older persons are considered as most revered members of the society in our country but treated otherwise when it comes to practical behavior with older people.

Younger generations seem to be more sensitive towards old age issues, but they don't interact with them accordingly due to various factors.

Awareness about specific needs & rights of older persons is quite higher in the society, but they find it practically impossible to translate their awareness into actual help/assistance to older persons.

Due to increased life span in old age, there is an urgent need for post-retirement income generational opportunities.

Human rights of older persons are being respected in the country, but situation is changing very fast and incidences of violation of human rights and elder abuse are increasing now.

Older persons are considered as most revered members of the society in our country but treated otherwise when it comes to practical behavior with older people.

Interaction with Older Persons

People interact with older persons quite often but interaction between the old and younger generations is not intimate because they don't have strong family bonding. Ever increasing generation gap can be bridged through motivating close interaction between the generations. Younger generations seem to be more sensitive towards old age issues, but they don't interact with them accordingly due to various factors.

Post Retirement Life in Old Age

Older persons are productive even after their retirement, but due to lack of post retirement job opportunities they remain unproductive throughout their remaining life. People consider older persons rich source of experience, knowledge and wisdom but always doubt their performance. Due to increased life span in old age, there is an urgent need for post-retirement income generational opportunities.

Classification of Older Persons

Older persons are treated as disadvantaged, marginalized section of society same as disabled persons, beggars and drug addicts, which is very disgraceful to older persons. Since old age is a natural phenomenon they should be categorized in some respectful category separately.

Sense of Insecurity InOld Age

Due to various reasons, majority of older persons have a sense of insecurity in old age. Breaking up of joint family system is the main cause of misplaced sense of insecurity in old age.

Discrimination in Old Age

Age discrimination is common in the country, but older persons themselves hardly complain about age discrimination and treat it as common social practice. People have limited awareness about protection against age discrimination.

Older Persons as Custodian of Traditional Values

Older persons are custodian of traditional values but due to limited intergenerational interactions they hardly transfer these values to younger generations.

Social Security in Old Age

Government policies and our social norms are not at par so far as social security in old age is concerned. In India situation of social security schemes is very depressing. Government should focus on social security schemes keeping in view of fast increasing population of older persons. At the same time, there should be some arrangements in the society so that older persons can lead a untroubled life in old age.

Legal Provisions for Older Persons

In India, our judicial system is going through sea change. Awareness among society about legal provisions for older persons is increasing but people are still doubtful about functioning of judicial system. Awareness about specific needs & rights of older persons is quite higher in the society, but they find it practically impossible to translate their awareness into actual help/assistance to older persons.

Healthcare in Old Age

Older persons face many health related problems, but it is not easy and convenient for older people to undergo treatment and checkups at various hospitals and clinics in our country. Healthcare in old age is most urgent area in which government and other stakeholders should work intensively.

Elder Abuse

Cases of elder abuse in India on rise but people hardly complain about them. Family members take their elderly family members for granted and older persons don't want to cross their four walls. There is a contradiction in the way people perceive older persons socially and at family level.

Human rights of older persons are being respected in the country, but situation is changing very fast and incidences of violation of human rights and elder abuse are increasing now.