

**EXPLORING THE QUALITY OF LIFE AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS IN OLD AGE HOMES:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY****Dr Jadab Dutta¹ & Ibtisam Hasin²****Review:** March 09, 2025**Acceptance:** March 09, 2025**Publication:** May, 11, 2025

Abstract: Old-age homes are structured living arrangements designed to satisfy the needs of senior citizens and their use has increased due to the global demographic shift towards aging populations. These facilities provide necessary care but differ greatly in their ability to provide a high standard of living. This study highlights the elements that influence residents' well-being by critically analyzing the interactions between social integration, emotional fortitude and physical care in assisted living facilities. The study evaluates differences in facilities' infrastructure, individualized care, social interaction and psychological health using a comparative perspective. It also examines how family engagement and institutional policies influence residents' experiences. The results highlight the need for more comprehensive and flexible support systems and expose differences in the quality of care. To promote a more respectable and fulfilling aging experience, this research promotes policy reforms that close the gap between institutional care and community-based approaches. The study adds to the current conversation on aging and long-term care by including lessons from various care models and highlighting the necessity of reforms that put both individual agencies and the group's welfare first.

Keywords: Quality of life, old age homes, elderly care & support systems

Introduction

Aging populations are becoming a distinguishing characteristic of the twenty-first century, and the global demographic landscape is undergoing a significant transition. The need for inclusive and sustainable senior care solutions has increased due to changes in conventional family arrangements and longer life expectancies. Many older persons face issues like financial instability, deteriorating health and social isolation, which make alternate living arrangements outside of traditional family support necessary. Old age homes, also known as senior care centers or assisted living facilities, have therefore emerged as crucial organizations in meeting the various requirements of the elderly. There is continuous discussion regarding these facilities' ability to improve inhabitants' general quality of life, even though they offer structured care, medical assistance and a sense of

¹ Corresponding Author; Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education and Special Education, Arunachal University of Studies (AUS)

² Research Scholar, Department of English, University of Science & Technology Meghalaya

community. The experiences of senior citizens in such environments are influenced by several elements, such as institutional regulations, healthcare access, emotional wellness, social inclusion and individual liberty. How successfully senior living facilities strike a balance between medical and social care, individual autonomy, and psychological well-being determines how much of a satisfying and respectable existence they can provide for their inhabitants. Through a multifaceted perspective, this study objectively evaluates the quality of life in assisted living facilities, taking into account both the advantages and drawbacks of institutional care. In addition to examining alternative care models like intergenerational living arrangements and community-based eldercare programs, it looks into how family, governmental and community-based support networks shape the experiences of the elderly. By doing this, the study hopes to add to the conversation about aging and institutional care by providing information on best practices and policy suggestions that put senior individuals' autonomy, dignity and general well-being first. To ensure that old age homes adapt to the changing requirements of the senior population worldwide, this study aims to inform more inclusive and compassionate approaches to aging through a thorough review of institutional frameworks and alternative elderly care models. Old-age homes play a crucial role in providing care and shelter to elderly individuals, particularly those who lack familial support. In Assam, as in many other parts of India, the demographic shift toward an aging population has increased the demand for institutional care. However, disparities in the quality of services across different facilities highlight the need for targeted interventions to ensure dignified aging. This analysis explores the factors influencing the operation of old-age homes in Assam, the challenges they face and policy recommendations to bridge existing gaps.

Review of literature

Literature reviews related to elderly care, each focusing on different dimensions of the topic:

- i. Psychosocial Aspects of Aging and Institutionalization:** Research on the psychological effects of institutionalization on senior citizens looks at cognitive decline, loneliness and depression. There are differences in the degree of social isolation and emotional health between elderly people living in the community and those in care institutions (Cattan et al., 2005; Victor et al., 2018).
- ii. Comparative Analysis of Aging in Different Cultural Contexts:** Research examines how traditional beliefs, family support and governmental legislation influence elder care as it relates to aging in Western and non-Western cultures. According to studies, collectivist societies tend to have more robust familial care systems, which lessen the need for institutionalized care (Silverstein et al., 2006).
- iii. Impact of Social Engagement on Cognitive and Emotional Health:** Research indicates that active engagement in social activities, including community programs, volunteering and intergenerational interactions, improves cognitive function and lowers the risk of dementia in older adults (Rowe & Kahn, 1997; Haslam et al., 2014)

- iv. Elderly Care and Quality of Life:** The Role of Technology - Current research looks at how AI-driven healthcare systems, assistive technology and telemedicine enhance senior care in both home and institutional settings. These developments improve older adults' autonomy, communication, and medical monitoring (Peek et al., 2016; Hwang et al., 2021).
- v. The Financial and Policy Implications of the Economic Burden of Elderly Care:** Research compares public and private funding mechanisms, pension plans and social security benefits across countries to meet the growing expenses of elder care. Research shows that the quality of senior care is impacted by financial stability (Barr, 2010; Colombo et al., 2011).
- vi. Emotional Resilience and Mental Health among Institutionalized Elders:** Research examines resilience factors and coping strategies that support institutionalized elders in preserving their mental health. It has been demonstrated that peer support, religious participation and mindfulness techniques can reduce stress and depression (MacLeod et al., 2016).
- vii. Nutritional Requirements in Elderly Care Facilities:** Aging and Nutrition-Reviews of the literature highlight the significance of nutrition for the health of the elderly, going over prevalent deficiencies, nutritional interventions and institutional meal planning techniques to avoid malnutrition and its associated diseases (Morley et al., 2001).
- viii. The Burden of Elderly Caregiver and Its Effects:** Research examines the financial, mental and physical toll that caring for the elderly, particularly in home-based settings, takes on caregivers. Important study topics include stress, burnout and support networks for caregivers (Schulz & Sherwood, 2008).
- ix. Gender and Aging:** How Gender Influences Elderly Care Experiences - Research shows that gender differences exist in aging experiences, with women more likely to experience healthcare disparities, financial insecurity and longer life expectancy, which increases the likelihood of institutionalization (Arber & Ginn, 1995).
- x. The Role of Spirituality and Religion in Aging and Elderly Care:** Research examines how spiritual practices and religious convictions affect older people's coping mechanisms, views of aging and general well-being. The efficacy of faith-based senior care initiatives is also investigated (Koenig, 2012).

Importance of the Study

This study is valuable because it goes beyond a traditional scientific evaluation and provides a critical analysis of the changing conversation around aging, institutional care and social responsibility. The role of old age homes is becoming more prominent as the world's population ages, necessitating a sophisticated knowledge of their significance within larger social, cultural and economic institutions. This study challenges reductive views of aging as a stage characterized only by dependency and deterioration by critically analyzing the lived experiences

of older people in institutional settings. Rather, it reframes aging as a dynamic and complex experience that is influenced by social engagement, psychological health and personal agency. With this perspective, assisted living facilities are rethought as potential centers of active aging, social interaction and improved life satisfaction rather than just places of necessity. Additionally, by calling for more inclusive, responsive and human-centered care models, this research adds to the policy conversation on aging by highlighting significant gaps in the current support systems. It emphasizes how crucial it is to move away from institutional structures that place a higher priority on basic needs and toward settings that promote dignity, independence and purposeful interaction for senior citizens. Beyond its implications for legislation, this study encourages important discussions among legislators, families, caregivers and the general public, promoting a fundamental change in the way that aging is viewed and handled. It aims to challenge ageist presumptions and advance an aging paradigm based on social integration, intergenerational solidarity and empowerment by challenging prevailing myths about assisted living facilities. In the end, this research ensures that aging is accepted as an important, respectable and active period of life by influencing institutional practice as well as larger cultural shifts.

Objectives of the Study

- i. To assess the quality of life of elderly residents in old age homes.
- ii. To examine the role of support systems in old age homes.
- iii. To analyze the psychological and emotional well-being of elderly residents in old age homes.
- iv. To explore the impact of social interactions and community engagement on the residents' overall happiness.
- v. To assess the effectiveness of healthcare services provided in old age homes.
- vi. To examine the financial and infrastructural challenges faced by old age homes in delivering optimal care.
- vii. To assess the nutritional standards and dietary provisions in old age homes and their impact on residents' health.
- viii. To identify policy gaps and advocate for policy reforms to enhance the quality of elderly care in institutional settings.

Methods

This study employs a secondary data analysis approach to explore the quality of life and support systems in old age homes through a comparative study. The research relies on existing literature, reports and publicly available datasets to derive meaningful insights. A comprehensive review of scholarly articles, books, government reports and non-governmental organization (NGO) publications was conducted to understand various dimensions of quality of life, including physical health, mental well-being, social engagement and support systems in old age

homes across different regions. The study utilizes secondary data from credible sources such as peer-reviewed journal articles focusing on elderly care and old age homes, reports from organizations like the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations (UN) and national health agencies, statistical databases from government health departments and international aging studies and previous comparative studies examining old age home conditions in various geographical locations. The collected data were systematically compared to identify patterns, similarities and differences in the quality of life and support systems available in old age homes, analyzing key indicators such as living conditions and facilities, medical and psychological support, social interaction and community engagement opportunities and institutional policies and government interventions. The secondary data were analyzed using thematic content analysis to extract significant themes related to elderly care, providing an in-depth understanding of different models of elderly care. Since this study is based solely on secondary data, ethical concerns related to direct human participation were not applicable; however, proper citation and acknowledgment of all sources were ensured to maintain research integrity and credibility. By adopting this secondary data analysis approach, the study offers a structured and objective examination of the quality of life and support systems in old age homes, contributing valuable insights to the field of gerontology and elderly care policy-making.

Analysis objective wise

Objective 1: To Assess the Quality of Life of Elderly Residents in Old Age Homes

To effectively assess the quality of life (QoL) of elderly residents in old age homes, various factors must be considered, including physical health, psychological well-being, social engagement and overall satisfaction with living conditions. The following table presents main parameters used to evaluate QoL among elderly individuals in old age homes:

Category	Indicators	Description
Physical Health	Mobility, Chronic Illnesses, Medical Care	Evaluates the residents' ability to move, prevalence of health conditions, and access to medical services.
Psychological Well-being	Emotional Health, Stress Levels, Cognitive Function	Measures mental stability, presence of depression or anxiety, and cognitive abilities such as memory and reasoning.
Social Engagement	Interaction with Peers, Family Visits, Recreational Activities	Assesses participation in social events, frequency of family visits, and availability of group activities.
Living Conditions	Hygiene, Nutrition, Safety	Examines cleanliness, quality of food, and security measures in the facility.

Category	Indicators	Description
Personal Satisfaction	Autonomy, Happiness, Purpose in Life	Reflects the residents' sense of independence, overall happiness, and feeling of purpose.

From the table above, we can observe the following points:

- Physical Health:** This factor determines how well the elderly residents maintain mobility, cope with chronic illnesses, and receive adequate medical attention. Poor health can significantly reduce QoL.
- Psychological Well-being:** Emotional stability, low stress levels, and cognitive sharpness contribute to a fulfilling life. Many elderly individuals suffer from depression or cognitive decline, which can impact their well-being.
- Social Engagement:** Interaction with fellow residents, visits from family, and participation in activities help prevent loneliness and isolation, enhancing QoL.
- Living Conditions:** The cleanliness of the environment, quality of meals, and security are essential for a comfortable and dignified life.
- Personal Satisfaction:** Having a sense of control, happiness, and purpose contributes to an overall positive outlook on life, making residents feel valued and fulfilled.

Objective 2: To examine the role of support systems in old age homes.

Support systems play a crucial role in ensuring the well-being, health, and emotional stability of elderly residents in old age homes. These systems include healthcare services, social interactions, emotional support, and recreational activities that contribute to a better quality of life. The following table outlines the key components of support systems and their significance in old age homes:

Support System	Components	Description
Healthcare Support	Medical Check-ups, Emergency Care, Medication Management	Ensures timely medical attention, treatment of illnesses, and proper medication management.
Social Support	Family Visits, Peer Interaction, Community Engagement	Encourages socialization, prevents loneliness, and fosters emotional well-being.
Emotional Support	Counseling, Psychological Assistance, Staff Interaction	Helps in managing stress, depression, and anxiety among elderly residents.
Recreational Support	Physical Activities, Hobbies, Group Events	Promotes mental and physical engagement, enhancing the overall happiness of residents.
Financial Support	Government Aid, Pension Schemes, Donations	Ensures financial stability for residents who may not have personal savings or family support.

From the table above, we can observe the following points:

- i. **Healthcare Support:** Elderly individuals often require frequent medical attention due to age-related health issues. Having access to medical professionals, regular check-ups, and emergency care ensures their well-being.
- ii. **Social Support:** Interactions with family, friends, and other residents in the facility help in reducing feelings of isolation and loneliness, which are common among elderly individuals.
- iii. **Emotional Support:** Many elderly individuals struggle with psychological issues such as depression and anxiety. Proper counseling and staff engagement can provide emotional stability.
- iv. **Recreational Support:** Engaging in hobbies, group activities, and physical exercises helps elderly residents stay active and mentally stimulated, contributing to a better quality of life.
- v. **Financial Support:** Many elderly individuals rely on pensions, government aid, or donations to meet their basic needs. Financial security ensures access to quality care, nutritious food, and a comfortable living environment.

Objective 3: To Analyze the Psychological and Emotional Well-being of Elderly Residents in Old Age Homes

Psychological and emotional well-being is essential for the overall health and quality of life of elderly residents in old age homes. Factors such as mental health, stress levels, social interactions, and access to emotional support play a crucial role in determining their well-being. The following table outlines the key aspects of psychological and emotional well-being among elderly individuals:

Aspect	Indicators	Description
Mental Health	Depression, Anxiety, Cognitive Function	Assesses the presence of mental health issues and cognitive decline, which can affect overall well-being.
Stress Levels	Loneliness, Financial Worries, Adjustment Issues	Identifies causes of stress, including isolation, financial concerns, and difficulty adapting to the old age home environment.
Social Interaction	Peer Relationships, Family Visits, Community Activities	Measures the level of engagement with others, which impacts emotional well-being and reduces feelings of loneliness.
Emotional Support	Counseling, Caregiver Support, Emotional	Evaluates the availability of professional and informal emotional support systems to help residents cope with

Aspect	Indicators	Description
	Expression	psychological challenges.
Life Satisfaction	Sense of Purpose, Happiness, Autonomy	Examines how content residents feel about their daily life, their sense of control, and their emotional fulfillment.

From the table above, we can observe the following points:

- Mental Health:** Many elderly residents suffer from depression, anxiety, or cognitive impairments such as dementia. Regular mental health assessments and therapy sessions can help improve their psychological well-being.
- Stress Levels:** Various stressors, including loneliness, financial insecurity, and difficulty adjusting to life in an old age home, can negatively impact emotional health. Identifying these stressors is essential for providing appropriate interventions.
- Social Interaction:** Strong relationships with peers, family visits, and participation in community activities can significantly enhance emotional well-being and reduce feelings of loneliness.
- Emotional Support:** Counseling services, empathetic caregivers, and an environment that encourages emotional expression help elderly residents manage their emotions effectively.
- Life Satisfaction:** A sense of purpose, happiness, and autonomy contributes to positive emotional well-being. Encouraging meaningful activities and allowing residents to make choices about their daily lives can improve their overall happiness.

Objective 4: To Explore the Impact of Social Interactions and Community Engagement on the Residents' Overall Happiness

Social interactions and community engagement play a vital role in enhancing the overall happiness and well-being of elderly residents in old age homes. Meaningful relationships, group activities, and a sense of belonging contribute to emotional stability and life satisfaction. The following table outlines the key components of social interactions and community engagement and their impact on residents' happiness:

Factor	Indicators	Impact on Happiness
Peer Relationships	Friendships, Daily Conversations, Group Bonding	Encourages companionship, reduces loneliness, and creates a sense of belonging.
Family Connections	Frequency of Visits, Communication with Loved Ones	Provides emotional comfort, strengthens personal identity, and enhances happiness.

Factor	Indicators	Impact on Happiness
Community Activities	Group Events, Celebrations, Religious Gatherings	Fosters social integration, adds excitement to life, and promotes engagement.
Recreational Engagement	Hobbies, Music, Games, Exercise Programs	Stimulates mental and physical activity, leading to improved mood and overall well-being.
Sense of Contribution	Volunteering, Mentorship, Participation in Decision-making	Increases self-worth, provides a sense of purpose, and fosters positive emotions.

From the table above, we can observe the following points:

- i. **Peer Relationships:** Having close friendships and regular interactions with fellow residents fosters companionship, reducing feelings of isolation and improving mood.
- ii. **Family Connections:** Regular visits and communication with family members provide emotional support and reassurance, strengthening personal identity and enhancing happiness.
- iii. **Community Activities:** Group celebrations, religious gatherings, and cultural programs help elderly residents feel integrated into a community, adding excitement and purpose to their lives.
- iv. **Recreational Engagement:** Participation in hobbies, music, games, and exercise programs keeps the residents mentally and physically active, preventing boredom and contributing to a positive state of mind.
- v. **Sense of Contribution:** Opportunities to mentor younger individuals, volunteer, or participate in decision-making within the facility help elderly residents feel valued and needed, increasing their overall life satisfaction.

Objective 5: To Explore the Impact of Social Interactions and Community Engagement on the Residents' Overall Happiness

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- v. **Sense of Contribution:** Opportunities to mentor younger individuals, volunteer, or participate in decision-making within the facility help elderly residents feel valued and needed, increasing their overall life satisfaction.

Objective 6: To Examine the Financial and Infrastructural Challenges Faced by Old Age Homes in Delivering Optimal Care

Old age homes face various financial and infrastructural challenges that affect their ability to provide high-quality care for elderly residents. Limited funding, inadequate facilities, and resource shortages can impact healthcare services, living conditions, and overall well-being. The following table outlines the major financial and infrastructural challenges and their effects on elderly care:

Challenge Type	Key Issues	Impact on Care Delivery
Financial Constraints	Limited Funding, High Operating Costs, Lack of Government Aid	Reduces access to quality healthcare, nutritious food, and skilled staff.
Staffing Issues	Shortage of Skilled Caregivers, Low	Affects the quality of personal care and

Challenge Type	Key Issues	Impact on Care Delivery
	Salaries, High Staff Turnover	medical attention given to residents.
Medical Equipment & Supplies	Insufficient Medical Facilities, Lack of Essential Medicines, Inadequate Emergency Services	Compromises timely diagnosis, treatment, and overall healthcare effectiveness.
Living Facilities	Poor Infrastructure, Overcrowding, Lack of Hygiene	Decreases comfort and safety, leading to unhygienic and stressful living conditions.
Technological Limitations	Absence of Digital Health Records, Limited Access to Assistive Technology	Reduces efficiency in healthcare management and limits mobility support for residents.

From the table above, we can observe the following points:

- Financial Constraints:** Many old age homes struggle with funding, leading to difficulties in maintaining proper healthcare services, providing nutritious meals, and hiring skilled staff.
- Staffing Issues:** Due to budget limitations, there is often a shortage of well-trained caregivers, leading to high workloads, burnout, and lower-quality personal care for residents.
- Medical Equipment & Supplies:** Lack of proper medical facilities and essential medicines results in delayed treatments, poor disease management, and inadequate emergency care.
- Living Facilities:** Poor infrastructure, overcrowding, and unhygienic conditions negatively impact the physical and emotional well-being of elderly residents, making daily life uncomfortable.
- Technological Limitations:** The absence of digital health records and assistive technologies (such as wheelchairs, hearing aids, and mobility aids) affects the efficiency of healthcare services and the independence of residents.

Objective 7: To assess the nutritional standards and dietary provisions in old age homes and their impact on residents' health.

Proper nutrition is essential for maintaining the health and well-being of elderly residents in old age homes. A balanced diet helps prevent malnutrition, supports immunity, and improves overall physical and mental health. The following table outlines key aspects of nutritional standards and dietary provisions and their impact on residents' health:

Nutritional Aspect	Key Indicators	Impact on Residents' Health
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Nutritional Aspect	Key Indicators	Impact on Residents' Health
Dietary Balance	Presence of Essential Nutrients (Proteins, Vitamins, Minerals)	Supports immunity, muscle strength, and cognitive function.
Meal Quality & Variety	Freshness, Taste, Diversity of Food Items	Enhances appetite, prevents dietary deficiencies, and improves satisfaction.
Special Dietary Needs	Diabetic-Friendly Meals, Low-Sodium Diets, Allergen-Free Options	Helps manage chronic illnesses such as diabetes, hypertension, and food allergies.
Meal Frequency & Portion Size	Number of Meals Per Day, Appropriate Serving Sizes	Ensures adequate energy intake, prevents malnutrition, and maintains healthy weight.
Hydration Management	Availability of Clean Water, Inclusion of Hydrating Foods	Prevents dehydration, supports kidney function, and enhances overall well-being.

From the table above, we can observe the following points:

- Dietary Balance:** A nutritionally rich diet that includes proteins, vitamins, and minerals is crucial for maintaining physical strength, cognitive function, and disease resistance.
- Meal Quality & Variety:** Offering fresh, tasty, and diverse meals encourages proper eating habits, prevents nutritional deficiencies, and enhances residents' overall satisfaction.
- Special Dietary Needs:** Many elderly residents have chronic conditions like diabetes or high blood pressure, requiring specialized diets to manage their health effectively.
- Meal Frequency & Portion Size:** Proper meal scheduling and appropriate portion sizes prevent undernutrition and overnutrition, ensuring a balanced diet.
- Hydration Management:** Adequate water intake and hydrating foods help prevent dehydration-related issues such as kidney problems, fatigue, and confusion.

Objective 8: To identify policy gaps and advocate for policy reforms to enhance the quality of elderly care in institutional settings.

Effective policies are essential for ensuring high-quality care for elderly residents in institutional settings. However, gaps in regulations, funding, healthcare services, and staff training can negatively impact the well-being of residents. Identifying these gaps and advocating for policy reforms can lead to improvements in elderly care. The following table outlines key policy gaps and the necessary reforms:

Policy Area	Identified Gaps	Proposed Reforms
Healthcare	Lack of mandatory health check-ups,	Implement regular health screenings and

Policy Area	Identified Gaps	Proposed Reforms
Standards	inadequate mental health support	psychological support programs.
Funding & Financial Support	Insufficient government funding, lack of financial aid for elderly care institutions	Increase budget allocations and introduce subsidy programs for elderly homes.
Staffing & Training	Shortage of trained caregivers, absence of mandatory geriatric care training	Enforce specialized training for caregivers and ensure adequate staff-to-resident ratios.
Living Conditions & Infrastructure	Poor sanitation, overcrowding, lack of assistive technology	Set minimum facility standards, ensure proper hygiene, and provide mobility aids.
Legal & Rights Protection	Limited legal oversight, cases of neglect and abuse, lack of grievance mechanisms	Strengthen regulatory frameworks, introduce monitoring bodies, and establish complaint redressal systems.

From the table above, we can observe the following points:

- i. **Healthcare Standards:** Many old age homes do not provide regular health check-ups or mental health support. Implementing mandatory screenings and psychological support programs can improve residents' health outcomes.
- ii. **Funding & Financial Support:** Limited government funding affects the quality of care provided. Increasing financial support can help improve medical services, staff salaries, and living conditions.
- iii. **Staffing & Training:** Many caregivers lack specialized geriatric care training. Enforcing training programs and maintaining proper staff-to-resident ratios will enhance care quality.
- iv. **Living Conditions & Infrastructure:** Poor sanitation, overcrowding, and lack of assistive devices reduce residents' quality of life. Establishing facility standards and providing essential aids can improve their well-being.
- v. **Legal & Rights Protection:** Cases of elder abuse and neglect occur due to weak legal oversight. Strengthening monitoring systems and providing residents with legal protection and grievance mechanisms can safeguard their rights.

Findings of the Study

- i. The quality of life of elderly residents is significantly influenced by physical health, psychological well-being, social engagement, living conditions and personal satisfaction. Poor health and limited mobility are major concerns, while social isolation negatively impacts emotional well-being.
- ii. Strong support systems, including healthcare, emotional support, social engagement, and financial aid, play a crucial role in improving the well-being of elderly residents. However, inadequate financial support and caregiver shortages limit the effectiveness of these systems.
- iii. Many elderly residents experience depression, anxiety, and stress due to loneliness, financial insecurities, and adjustment difficulties. Limited access to counseling and emotional support services exacerbates these issues. Social interactions and meaningful activities significantly improve emotional well-being.
- iv. Regular social interactions, family visits, group activities and recreational programs help reduce feelings of loneliness and improve overall happiness. However, limited family involvement and lack of engaging activities in some facilities hinder the positive impact of socialization.
- v. Financial constraints, staff shortages, poor living conditions, and outdated medical facilities negatively impact the quality of care provided in old age homes. Limited funding and lack of government support make it difficult to maintain high living standards.
- vi. Proper nutrition is essential for the health and well-being of elderly residents. However, many facilities struggle with providing balanced meals, special dietary options and adequate hydration. Nutritional deficiencies contribute to health complications among residents.
- vii. There are significant gaps in elderly care policies, including inadequate healthcare services, insufficient funding, lack of trained caregivers and poor infrastructure. Strengthening policies related to healthcare, staffing, and legal rights protection is crucial to improving elderly care.
- viii. While old age homes provide
 - ix. shelter and basic care, the overall quality of life varies significantly based on available resources, social engagement opportunities and emotional support. Facilities with strong support systems and well-maintained infrastructure provide better living experiences, while financially strained homes struggle to meet essential needs.

Discussion of Findings with Review of Literature

The findings of the study align closely with existing literature on elderly care, shedding light on various aspects of aging, institutionalization, and quality of life.

- i. **Quality of Life and Institutionalization:** The study establishes that the quality of life of elderly residents is significantly influenced by physical health, psychological well-being, social engagement, living conditions, and personal satisfaction. Literature on the psychosocial aspects of aging (Cattan et al., 2005;

Victor et al., 2018) supports this by indicating that elderly individuals in institutional settings often experience cognitive decline, loneliness, and depression, particularly when compared to those in community living arrangements. The differences in social isolation levels emphasize the importance of fostering engagement within institutional settings.

- ii. **Role of Social Support Systems:** The study finds that strong support systems, including healthcare, emotional support, and financial aid, play a crucial role in elderly well-being, though they are often inadequate due to financial constraints and caregiver shortages. Research on the burden of elderly caregiving (Schulz & Sherwood, 2008) highlights the mental and physical toll on caregivers, suggesting that caregiver shortages not only affect institutionalized elderly but also extend to family-based care settings.
- iii. **Psychological Well-being and Mental Health Challenges:** Findings indicate that many elderly residents experience depression, anxiety, and stress due to loneliness, financial insecurity, and adjustment difficulties. Haslam et al. (2014) emphasize that social engagement through community programs and volunteering significantly improves cognitive and emotional health. Furthermore, MacLeod et al. (2016) discuss resilience factors, showing that peer support, religious participation, and mindfulness techniques help alleviate mental distress, aligning with the study's suggestion that meaningful activities improve emotional well-being.
- iv. **Impact of Social Interactions:** Regular social interactions, family visits, and group activities improve elderly residents' emotional health, though inadequate family involvement and lack of engagement opportunities hinder these benefits. Research on intergenerational interactions (Rowe & Kahn, 1997) supports this, emphasizing that participation in social activities enhances cognitive function and reduces dementia risks. Koenig (2012) further discusses the role of spirituality and faith-based senior care programs in enhancing social connectedness and well-being.
- v. **Financial Constraints and Infrastructure Challenges:** Financial constraints, staff shortages, poor living conditions, and outdated medical facilities were found to negatively impact the quality of elderly care. The economic burden of elderly care (Barr, 2010; Colombo et al., 2011) demonstrates that funding mechanisms and pension systems play a crucial role in maintaining institutional living standards. Limited financial support contributes to deteriorating infrastructure and inadequate healthcare services, reinforcing the need for policy reforms in elderly care funding.
- vi. **Nutritional Deficiencies and Health Outcomes:** Proper nutrition is crucial for elderly health, yet many facilities struggle with providing balanced meals and special dietary options. Morley et al. (2001) highlight the significance of adequate nutrition, detailing common deficiencies and the role of institutional meal

planning in preventing malnutrition-related diseases. The study's findings indicate that nutritional deficiencies contribute to health complications, necessitating improved dietary interventions.

- vii. **Policy Gaps and Elderly Care:** The study identifies gaps in elderly care policies, including insufficient funding, lack of trained caregivers, and inadequate healthcare infrastructure. Research on elderly care policies (Colombo et al., 2011) highlights how government and private sector funding mechanisms influence care quality. Strengthening healthcare services, caregiver training, and legal rights protection is essential to improving the overall care framework.
- viii. **Institutional Variations in Quality of Care:** While some facilities provide strong support systems and well-maintained infrastructure, financially strained homes struggle to meet essential needs. Research on comparative aging in different cultural contexts (Silverstein et al., 2006) suggests that collectivist societies rely more on familial care, reducing the need for institutionalization. However, where institutional care is necessary, resource availability significantly affects the quality of life, as the study indicates.

Conclusion

The study highlights that the quality of life (QoL) of elderly residents in old age homes is influenced by multiple interrelated factors, including physical health, psychological well-being, social engagement, living conditions and personal satisfaction. Poor health, limited mobility, and inadequate medical care significantly reduce QoL, while emotional support, social interactions, and recreational activities play a crucial role in enhancing overall well-being.

Strong support systems-encompassing healthcare, emotional assistance, social interactions, and financial aid-are essential for maintaining the dignity and happiness of elderly residents. However, financial constraints, staffing shortages, and inadequate infrastructure often limit the effectiveness of these systems. Many residents experience mental health challenges such as depression, anxiety and stress due to loneliness, financial insecurities, and difficulties adjusting to institutional life. Limited access to counseling and emotional support further exacerbates these issues.

Social interactions and community engagement have a positive impact on the residents' overall happiness, reducing feelings of isolation and improving their emotional well-being. Regular family visits, peer relationships and participation in meaningful activities foster a sense of belonging and purpose. However, in some facilities, limited family involvement and a lack of engaging programs hinder socialization efforts.

Financial and infrastructural challenges remain significant barriers to delivering optimal care. Many old age homes struggle with inadequate funding, outdated medical facilities, and poor living conditions, affecting residents' overall experience. The absence of well-balanced nutrition, specialized dietary options, and proper hydration management further contributes to health complications among the elderly.

Policy gaps in elderly care, including insufficient healthcare services, inadequate financial support, lack of trained caregivers and weak legal oversight, present major challenges in improving institutional care for the elderly. Strengthening policies related to healthcare standards, funding, staff training, and legal protections is necessary to enhance the quality of care provided in old age homes.

While old age homes provide shelter and essential services, the overall well-being of residents varies significantly depending on the resources available, social engagement opportunities and emotional support systems. Facilities with well-maintained infrastructure, adequate medical care, and active social environments provide a higher quality of life, while those with financial and resource limitations struggle to meet even basic needs. Addressing these gaps through improved policies, increased funding, and enhanced caregiving standards is essential to ensuring dignified and fulfilling lives for elderly residents in institutional settings.

Recommendations

- i. Strengthening mental health support services within old age homes.
- ii. Enhancing social interaction programs and community involvement initiatives.
- iii. Implementing standardized care protocols to ensure uniform quality across institutions.
- iv. Increasing government and private sector collaboration for better funding and resource allocation.

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