

***Perspectives on Solving the Problems  
of Elderly People : A Case Study of  
Social Welfare Centre (Elderly's  
Home), Pashupati***

***Hom Raj Dahal\****

*The rate of population growth in the 2021 census is only 0.98 percent in Nepal. If this trend continues, the projection for 2050 A.D. is 18.6 percent of the older population in Nepal. Western culture (Furr, 2004) and globalization have entered the Nepali life and aged people are being alienated and being suffered (Subedi, 2004). The goals of the studies have been to discover the circumstance of the aged people, to pick out the essential troubles of aged people, and endorse fixing the troubles of the aged. By adopting the historical-comparative method, the research turned into done in 2015 and 2022 in Pashupati Elderly Home. I have collected primary information through commentary and interviews and secondary information with the aid of using reviewing preceding literature from books, articles, and reports. The*

**\* Former Member of the House of Representatives, Nepali Congress Party: Lecturer, Department of Anthropology, Tri-Chandra Campus, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu (Nepal) E-mail: <hom.dahal@trc.tu.edu.np; homraj.dahal@gmail.com>**

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*studies observed that only 15 percent of the people are receiving social safety advantages due to numerous administrative problems. They want the development of all, and they're glad about small gestures from any agency. The Earthquake of 2015 and the Covid-19 pandemic have made residing increasingly tough for the aged in the vintage age home. Adopting the social constructionist approach, powerful measures for assisting the aged are advocated, and in addition, future research is recommended.*

[**Keywords** : Social Constructionism, Globalization, Elderly people, Earthquake, Covid-9]

## **1. Introduction**

When there's no person to attend to aged humans, they grow to be alienated and depressed. A few of them may also pass from their homes to take refuge in geriatric homes. Samajhkalyan Kendra Briddhasram, Pashupati was established in 1882 A.D. and is being operated by the name of Social Welfare Centre (Elderly's Home), Pashupati.

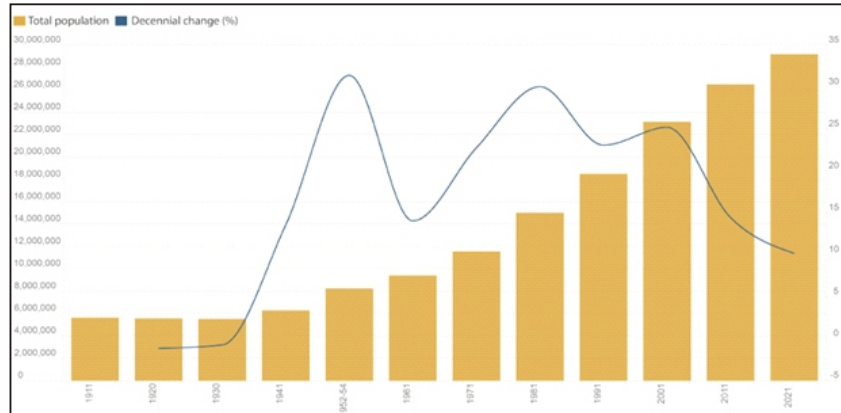
So, the research was carried out at Social Welfare Centre Elderly Home, (Samajhkalyan Kendra Briddhasram, Pashupati) to discover consequences primarily based totally on the subsequent studies' questions : What is the demographic scenario of elderly humans in Nepal? What sort of implications on elderly folks do the increase in existence span effects? What must be performed to defend elderly folks in instances to come? Why do old people opt to stay in antique age homes? What is the prevailing scenario of aged people dwelling in Pashupati Bridhrashram? What kind of facilities is supplied by Nepal Government and NGOs to the aged at Pashupati Bridhrashram?

## **2. Research Method**

This study is based on both exploratory and descriptive research designs. Historical-comparative research is done to find out the situation of aged people, and the condition of the Pashupati Briddashram in Kathmandu, Nepal. The study was carried out in 2015 and 2022. The total old, aged population was 215 in 2015. But there are 99 people residing in 2022. The sources of data are based on both primary and secondary data. Data are both qualitative and quantitative. Data collection and needed information have been collected from interviews, participants well as non-participant observation, key informants, journals, books, and newspapers.

### 3. Findings

The present census of 2021 in Nepal has found that the growth rate of Nepalese population is only 0.98 (“Nepal’s Population is 29,192,480”). This has explained that the life span of the people is increasing.



Source : <https://kathmandupost.com/national/2022/01/27/nepal-s-population-is-29-192-480>

The above figure describes that in every ten years from 1950-to 2021, population growth is decreasing compared to the growth rate of old age people. This is due to family planning, migration, health facilities, education, and development. Though this is a positive side of population control, increasing elderly and decreasing youth population should be properly analyzed and solutions should be given. Population Situation Analysis has projected that “The size of older persons will reach nearly 3.5 million by 2031, although the average annual growth rate is expected to decline”.

In Nepal, people of age more than 60 are considered elderly or senior citizens. Their population in 2011 was 6.5 percent. CBS census of 2021 has projected their population of 8.0 percent at present. The projection for 2050 A.D. is 18.6 percent according to Helping Age (“Ageing Population in Nepal”). The following figure illustrates the projection of older people for 2050 :

#### Ageing Population 2019 and Projection for 2050

	2019	2050
Population aged 60 and above (total)	2,521,000	6,568,000
Population aged 60 and above (% of the total population)	8.7	18.6

Older women aged 60+ (% of the total population)	4.69	11.14
Life expectancy (males)	68.83	75.45
Life expectancy (females)	71.72	78.98
Old-Age Dependency Ratio (Age 65+ / Age 15-64)	8.9	18.1
Rural older people (% of the total population)	4.47	
Urban older people (% of the total population)	0.83	
Older persons living alone aged 60 and above (% of the total population aged 60+)	3.9	

**Source :** <https://ageingasia.org/ageing-population-nepal/#:~:text=As%20of%202019%2C%20over%202,will%20be%20a%20senior%20citizen.>

#### 4. Globalization and the Elderly People

Gerontechnology industries and bio-medicalization are the recent trends of study of socio-cultural history as well as studies on ageism in the global context (Joyce and Loe, 2010). In the context of globalization, L. Allen Furr explains why educated people rationalize western medical treatment, but some elderly still believes in cultural treatment. “The study of 276 Nepali teachers indicates that those who agreed with certain Western values and cultural tastes were more likely to label the girl’s behaviour as a mental illness and to refer her to a Western-style social agent for treatment rather than to a traditional Nepali helper. These findings lend tentative support to the notion that medicalization is a function of Western culture” (Furr, 2004). Health insurance copied from the western medicalization system may take time for the elderly in Nepal to practice. Furr’s (2004) study is only on the “deviant behaviour of a girl”. So, it suggests studying elderly people.

Pradeep Acharya had investigated the situation of the older people residing in old-age homes in Kathmandu (Acharya, 2008). The result he has drawn are : “An analysis shows significant positive effects of homes on the life of the senior citizen. The survey results indicate that in a number of respects elderly homes are favourable for the residents and the society as a whole despite some problems” (Acharya, 2008).

Similarly, People living in Pashupati Briddashram had mental problems and physical diseases. (Ranjan *et al.*) Due to insurgency in Nepal, women, children, and the elderly were tormented by the armed conflict from 1996-to 2006. Medication and healing of these social

groups on mental and physical health were not done well concerning the then warring groups. So, some took refugees in such homes.

Jeanne Shea & Hong Zhang are critical of the one-child policy in China. They presume that elderly people will be double by 2050. Family care and love should be practiced in Chinese culture. Further research is necessary to study the suffering of old aged people (Shea and Zhang, 2016).

H. Minhat and R. Amin (2012) have investigated differently on socio-cultural practices of older people in Malaysia. They have found that various types of social activities are necessary for aging people to live healthy life. They have concluded that “the higher social support received from family members should also be channeled into doing more active and physical activities which were proven to have numerous health benefits and not only into doing social activities which can be sedentary and passive in nature.”

The older persons who are in elderly homes in the USA said that the major reasons for being homeless were psychological, financial, social, and unemployment (Ng *et al.*). US life is shown more in urban areas of the country. “If rural homelessness is more “hidden” than urban homelessness, the elderly homeless in rural areas are even more hidden than their urban counterparts” (Ng *et al.*).

Elder people suffer so many health diseases at a deteriorating age. One of such problems is osteoporosis and hip fractures (Inc). Hosam K. Kamel has investigated on secondary prevention of hip fractures among the hospitalized elderly USA. Kamel suggests that “Medical and geriatric consult physicians should address osteoporosis assessment and prevention of future fractures as part of their consultation.”

Senior citizens were in agitation for a better life. Elderly people were struggling for their rights in the street of Kathmandu. They were celebrating Deepawali, Chhath dancing, and singing for the betterment of aged people at that movement (Dahal, 2014). In 2014, SAARC Summit was successfully ended in Kathmandu declaring safeguarding older people of the Indian Sub-Continent. In the name of clearing main streets, senior citizens were brutally lathi-charged. Dahal (2014) concludes that the situation is grim for older people.

These elderly people long for love and respect from their children. So, people should stop giving excuses to not take the responsibility for their parents and start analyzing their behaviour about what things

they are doing. So ample attention is necessary for the elder people. Subedi (2004) emphasized proper attention to the senior citizen because realistic programs and state subsidies are the works to be done.

Dahal has found that “Due to government initiative and NGO cooperation to elderly people at the Bridhaashram (Elderly Home), the living atmosphere is provided by giving basic needs. But exclusion from family and society at large is a great problem for them (Dahal, 2014).

In Hubli city of India, a case study on the condition of the elderly at an old age home was carried out by Uma M. Jali in 2014. The findings suggest that due to no social protection, poor health, without food, meaninglessness, and powerlessness, elderly people opt to enter the old age homes in India (Jali, 2014).

Kapil Babu Dahal has studied the conflict era (1996-2006) victims, especially widowhood. Using a lens of medical anthropology, he found that the widows are experiencing a new kind of trauma and misery at present because they are aging day by day (Dahal, 2010).

## **5. Patterns of Evolution of Elderly Care**

When the government initiated Institutional care for senior citizens, it was named Handi in 1882 AD. It was started at the Panchadeval (five shrines) in Pashupati area. In 1999, the UN declared 1999 AD as the International Year of Elders (“International Year of Older Persons”). After that, the government arranged acts in 2007, rules, and regulations to safeguard old, aged persons (NLC). These legal provisions guaranteed social, economic, and human rights for the older people in principle. The Government declared that “This act also ensures nourishment and health care for old age; maintains their dignity; ensures their property and have right to use their property; special facilities and exemption of transportation fair for old age (NLC).”

The United Nations celebrates the International Day of Older Persons on October 1 globally to “unfold focus approximately problems affecting the elderly” (“International Day of Older Persons 2021: Date, History, Significance, and Theme”).

## **6. Earthquake and Elderly at Briddhashram**

215 aged people were living in Pashupati Elderly home. The elderly women in the home were 111. No. of males were 104. The percentage of women was 51.62%. The percentage of Men was

48.38%. In 2015, the meal was given twice a day. Rooms were shared. Health facilities and sanitation were provided. To entertain, television was provided. Half of the elderly people living there were mentally retarded. Some of them made cotton wicks. They said that they would use some and sell the rest at a certain price. Most of them said that they were happy with the facilities they got. 25 to 30 elderly people residing there died every year.

Among the respondents at that time, Dambar Kumari, Shambhu Sing, and Kanchi Maya told their stories, and they were living there for more than 10 years. In 2015, 207 persons followed the Hindu religion out of 215. It is 96.3% of the population. Only 8 people are non-Hindu : They were Buddhist. In Nepal about 83% population are Hindus. Only 10% are Buddhist. Compared to the national data, Hindus were more there in the elderly home than the national average. This might be because the Ashram is in front of Lord Pashupati Nath Temple.

The Major Earthquake of 2015 killed about 10,000 people, wounded about 100000, and destroyed the homes of 8,00,000 people. The gaps between steps which are 12 inches are too big for the elderly to climb. It also destroyed the structures of Ashram making them inhabitable. The main entrance to the Pashupati Briddhashram has been closed. A notice on 'please use the door on the south'. Two long wooden beams have been used to support the building support (teka) from the outside. 35 people were shifted to the premise because of the destruction and disabilities after the Earthquake. Reconstruction is not carried out of the temples and Ashram after 6 years. The five temples may collapse along with the building making tragedy.

## **7. Covid-9 and the Present Situation of the Elderly**

Toilets had separate pans and commodes for the optional use of the residents. The main gate was constructed at the southern end of the Pashupati Briddashram. The massive earthquake of 8. 3 Richter scale has completely damaged Pancha Dewal temple. It is inside the premises of Briddashram. Nepal's Government was not able to renovate the Temple which is of religious and archeological significance.

The government did repair the adjacent structures within six years except for these temples. The chief of the office elaborated the Rules of 2058 B.S. and Procedure Manual of 2074. These legal

documents from Nepal Government determine for smooth functioning of the Briddashram. Briddashram has a 15 million Nepali Rupees fixed deposit in Sidhartha Bank.

These old people are on the ground floor with the roof of metal roof sheet (jastapata). The total number of old people in Social welfare Center Pashupati Old Age Home is 99. Of the total population, females are 61 and males are 38. Of the 35 differently-abled people, 18 people are unable to walk, 10 are blind, and 7 have mental disorder problems. These people are in miserable conditions due to their health problems. Near these people, toilets, bathrooms, and Sanitary rooms are allotted to all 99 old age people.

The residents are facing many serious illnesses. They are having non-communicable diseases like asthma, blood pressure, and diabetes. They are taking medicines regularly with the help of staff. During the pandemic of Covid-19, the residents were isolated from the mixing with the mass outside. This made no death from Covid-19 at the time of the pandemic. The people need regular treatment. But there is no ambulance for emergency. Only one health assistant and 11 staff are giving health facilities.

In 2022, The total number of elderly residing is 99. 61 females and 38 males stay at the Briddashram. Of them, 36 are in normal health Conditions. 18 people cannot talk, other 18 have hearing impairment problems, 10 people are blind and 4 people Cannot hear. 7 people are mentally disordered. In this finding, most people are in serious health problems. There are 26 Staffs to take care of the elderly. One executive officer, an accountant, ANM-1, Kitchen staff -7, Caregivers-5, attendants-6, sanitation workers-2, security personnel-1 and peons-2 constitute total human resources for the Briddashram.

According to Omkar Prasad Pandey, Chief of the Office, at present, 26 government employees run the home and take care. Only one Health Assistant is available to care. Medical facilities are available to the elders. Some were seen listening to the music. Recently, Nepal observed a day for elders. The minister visited the old age home in Pashupati and provided more facilities. Respondents were happy to have mutton meat, eggs, and paneer provided by the government.

For getting a haven for the senior residents who're homeless, one needs to provide Nepalese citizenship, a letter of recommen-



dition from the local government, and consent from the ministry is necessary.

Old, aged people more than 70 years and poor can get social security allowance of 4000 rupees monthly in 2022. However, old, and very poor who are unable to produce legal documents are deprived. In Pashupati Briddaahram, only 15 people are receiving social security allowance excluding 84.

## **8. Conclusions**

The physical inability makes elderly people in more miserable conditions as they are suffering from diseases and economic hardship. Common problems they are struggling with are asthma, joint, pedal pain, backbone pain, blood pressure, and paralysis. They face eye vision problems, hearing impairment, and sensory loss. They need psychological treatment for their physical and mental well-being.

The findings suggest that numerous problems are faced by old age people in Bridhasram. Government and NGO sectors should work to improve the life of old age people at all levels. Globalization is not the only component affecting the life of elderly people. Other factors like environmental, situational, individual, regional, and social policy affect equally.

Insurance, pension, and allowance are helping the poor elderly. But only 15% are getting these due to various document inadequacies. Not all poor elderly are getting opportunities to enter Government homes. After being able to have mutton, eggs, and paneer, the elderly inside the old age home were seen as satisfied.

Fewer people are offered to stay at the old age home. The structure of the home should be reconstructed as soon as possible. Doctors and ambulances should be on duty for 24 hours. A comparative study of the home suggests that facilities are not adequate, and the home should be transferred to a safe location.

Global and national conventions, acts, regulations, and directives are positive steps for the care of the elderly. The state should address the right demands of the senior citizens. Older aged people are projected to double within the 30 years from the present time. So, realistic planning should be done at the national and international levels.

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