

**FROM HOMES TO HAVENS- MICRO LEVEL INSIGHTS AND GLOBAL
INSPIRATIONS FOR RETHINKING ELDERCARE IN TAMIL NADU**

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ABSTRACT

The rise in the number of private old age homes in Tamil Nadu, despite the strong cultural norms surrounding familial care, underscores the emerging socio-economic pressures affecting support systems for the elderly. This research investigates the health and socio-economic difficulties faced by elderly individuals (aged 60+) living in old age homes versus those in family environments across Chennai and Madurai, and assesses suitable contextual solutions. Based on data collected from 120 participants, the study reveals that elders residing in old age homes had considerably lower past earnings (mean ₹7,693) in comparison to those living with families (mean ₹17,758), and a larger proportion lacked pension support (46.66% versus 25%). It is often financial necessity, rather than personal choice, that compels seniors to enter old age homes. Nevertheless, field observations indicate that not all seniors have a negative perspective on old age homes; in particular, unmarried individuals exhibited greater adaptability and acceptance of life in such institutions. Economic differences among private old age homes were apparent, with variations in the quality of care based on what residents could afford. By conducting a critical analysis of international eldercare policies and considering their applicability to Tamil Nadu, this study proposes the implementation of flexible, medically-supported, and rehabilitation-inclusive eldercare systems that are adapted to the cultural and economic realities of the region.

KEYWORDS: Ageing Population; Elderly Care; Old Age Homes; Diabetes Management; Cultural Norms; Familial Care; Community-based Eldercare; Physical & Mental Health; Socio-economic Vulnerabilities; Rehabilitation Services; Widow Pension; Financial Security; Health and Well-being; Gerontology; Tamil Nadu; Global Policy Transfers; Elderly Health Policy; Policy Implications.

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