

# **Coresidence of the Older Persons in India: Who Received Support and What are the Levels of Familial Support?**

**Kinkar Mandal<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>PhD Research Scholar, Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC), Nagarabhavi, Bangalore, Karnataka, India

## **Abstract:**

*Traditionally, in South Asian countries one finds strong patrilineal practices where older parent coreside with their children. Coresidence with adult children in an extended family is a common type of support in India, where kin provide personal care and emotional support to older persons. In the family older parents play a significant role in nurturing young ones and are considered guardians for maintaining traditional values and morals. With this moral value, parents continue residing with their adult children who have been reshaped by family structure and social change.*

*The present research paper aims to understand the levels of family support and who received support from their children in India. The analysis is based on BKPAI-2011 data and has found that 'coresidence' is the primary form of family support to older persons in India. The paper argues that the gender status of older persons is strongly associated with coresidence. Further, the study concludes that the older persons who live in rural areas, widows, belong to the Muslim community are found to be in good health and have higher chances to coresidence with their adult children.*

**Keywords:**Coresidence; Family; Support; Value: Elder Persons

## **Introduction**

India has the second largest and fastest growing older population in the world. According to the 2011 census, there are 104 million older persons in the country constituting 8.6 percent of the population (Census of India, 2011). Improvements in medical technology, health and basic facilities have reduced the mortality leading to increased longevity. Also, changing social norms, values, and the introduction of modern contraceptive methods have reduced fertility. The new generation now deviates from the care and support giving to elderly family

members (Jadhav et al., 2013). Better and sustainable livelihood sources motivate children to migrate from rural to urban areas, leaving the elderly to care for themselves.

Ever since children have been responsible for taking care of the older parents who were treated with honour and respect, in patriarchal society's eldest son was assigned responsibility to care for elderly parents. Older parents played a significant role in nurturing the young in the family and were considered guardians for maintaining traditional values and morals (Nayar, 1999). However, this tradition has changed in a society which is reflected by transformation in family structure. There is a broad consensus regarding the family structure alteration that has taken place with demographic and socio-economic changes. Couples tend to agree for one child or even being childless especially in urban areas leading to their shrinking size of the family. This change has impacted on the increased number of aged that required extensive physical, financial and social support for the elderly (Shuman, 1988).

Coresidence with adult children in an extended family is a common type of support in Indian, where kin provide personal care and emotional support to the elderly (Nandal, Dhatri and Kadian, 1987). The joint family system is an ancient Indian institution and considered as the natural support system for the elderly. However, in the last few decades, this traditional joint family system has changed due to urbanisation and modernisation process. Modernisation has introduced independence, personal mobility, and personal achievements which influenced the changes in structure and the functioning of the family system (Scbastian and Sekher, 2012). In most of the families, adult son and their family members take care of the older parents, and the daughter-in-law is the primary caregiver. Due to increasing levels of education, rising professional opportunities, and working women they are unable to support the elderly.

Davanzo et al. (2011) find that more often, prolonged survival of women, leave them behind alone after the demise of their husband coupled with other dimensions of gender and families which keep them susceptible for a lonely living. Panigrahi (2009) and Lamb (2000) argue that the proportion of elderly living alone is on rising with growing neglect for older care especially widowed and women from socially, economically, and politically marginalised. Further, they make a note that children prefer to leave alone wherever women are ill-treated and abused in the family of their children. Old people who have lost their spouses, many of them live alone possibly because they wish to be independent and have deep attachments with their own home (Townsend, 1963).

## **Literature Review**

### **Theoretical perspective**

Coresidence is the most important form of family support in developing countries, particularly for Asian countries. Approximately three-quarters of older Asian people coreside with their adult children (Martin 1990). Recently research shows that this traditional family value has been a change in East Asian countries such as Japan (Hirosima 1987; Martin and Culter 1983), South Korea (Kim and Choe 1992), and Taiwan (Martin 1991).

Traditionally, older parents in India coreside with their children and gets great respect from their children. Coresidence with children is a significant indicator of family values. The researcher has found that living alone is increased in India with the increase of nuclearisation of family, migration of the family members and urbanisation. India has a diverse country in terms of different religion, culture and ethnic group with a different attitude toward coresidence of the older person. The Indian, have a strong patriarchal joint family structure where older persons coreside with their children. Among the different religious group, Muslims has strongly filial piety toward older parents.

### **Why should we study coresidence?**

Coresidence with children is a mutually advantageous arrangement (a joint decision by both the parties), involving a two-way transfer of financial and other services between elderly parents and adult children. Simultaneously, it serves the dual purpose of childcare of children and vice versa, parents getting care and support from their children (Sarmistha, 2006). The proportion of elderly living alone is increasing along with the growing neglect of elderly care especially widowed or single women who are ill-treated and abused in the family prefer to live alone. Old people when they lose their spouse, many of them living alone as much as possible as they wish to be independent and have deep attachments with their own home.

India too is showing trends like western countries, i.e., functionally active and healthy elders now opt to live an independent life. There is an active component of wealth gradient which is determining the living arrangements of the elderly. On the other hand, the economic security of the elderly emerges as a significant problem in the absence of coresidence with their children.

Traditionally, the joint family system is an Indian familial norm where older persons, their children and grandchildren living together, but this is in decline due to industrialisation and urbanisation (Behera and Dasthagir, 2015). Simultaneously, in the contemporary Western culture, greater emphasis on the achievement of materialistic goals, excessive individualism, and self-centred and self-indulgent lifestyles have tended to erode spiritual and altruistic values considered to be necessary for family harmony and unity (Dan A. Chekki (1996).

### **What levels are in South-Asia and India?**

In developing countries, the role of children is to support their older parents. Coresidence with the children is a common type of support which is high in developing countries compared to developed countries. Continent-wise variations indicate that a higher percentage of coresidence with the adult child is found in Asia (66.3percent for male and 68.3percent for female). Whereas in Africa the percentage of older men living with an adult child ranges from 25 percent in Mozambique to 70 percent in Egypt and Latin America older adult residing with children is higher, in Peru (60percent) and lower in Bolivia (41percent). In Asia, the highest proportion of older men living with an adult child (80percent) is observed in Pakistan (Bongaarts and Zimmer, 2002).

Cameron and Cobb-Clark (2008) show that in Indonesian 62.5 percent older person are living with one or more of their children and 21.3 percent are living with their spouse, 9.0 percent are living with others, and only 7.0 percent are living alone. The intergenerational household rate of coresidence with parents and children is higher in southern European countries compare to northern and continental Europe, and the proportion of living with a child is low and almost non-existent in northern Europe (Attias-Donfut and Ogg, 2005)

A comparative study of coresidence patterns between China, Korea, and Japan has found that the highest percent of older person coreside with their children. It also shows that China has the maximum percentage (80 percent, 1980) of coresidence, simultaneously Korea has 64 percent (1980), and Japan has 65 percent (1985) of people coreside with their children (Linda G. Martin, 1990).

Coresidence with children in Bangladesh is founded one of the family traditions between generations. This tradition has changed due to migration and urbanisation in Bangladesh. Ghuman and Ofstedal (2004) have estimated pattern of coresidence between son and daughter has found that one half to two third of older parents living with their married

children and older parents are more likely to live their son than a daughter. Similarly, the ratio of living with son and daughter has found 1.5 to 3.6, and the ratio of living with married son and daughter has found 6.8 to 9.6 (Ghuman and Ofstedal, 2004).

Various survey studies show that India has the highest percent of older people living with their children. NFHS-II found that almost 94 percent of the elderly people are coresiding with their children, 2.4 percent are living alone, and 3.5 percent are living other relation (Rajan and Sanjay, 2003). NSSO 60th round (2004) data shows that 5.2 percent of Indian elderly are living alone and 12 percent of them lived with their spouse. BKPAI (Building Knowledge Base on Population Ageing in India) data (2011) shows that 6 percent of elderly are living alone and 15 percent of them live with their spouse only.

### **Factors associated with coresidence**

Older parents' living with the children is an essential mode of intergenerational support and mutual advantage on arrangements (joint decision by both parents and children) which involved two-way of support on financial and other services between older parents and adult children (Sarmistha, 2006). Coresidence of the older is not uninformed, which is effects of many factors including marital status, the number of children, age, health status, financial resources, family size and the availability of support givers. Hence, the focus is on factors responsible for coresidence variations.

Many of the existing literature on coresidence with children had focused on different types of living arrangement with their children. Chaudhuri and Roy (2009) found that older women are more likely to live alone than the older man. Women tend to marry relatively older men. Therefore, it is expected that women are more likely to be widowed and lived as a widower for a more extended period of times.

In a society with the married older couple are more likely to coreside with adult children than unmarried older in consideration of old-age support. Married older couple gets to benefit from the children in terms of paying household rents, medical bills when they are in ill. Similarly, unmarried older needs more coresidence supports because of the lack of companionship and unavailable of the spouse. Among the unmarried older women are more likely to coreside in the multigenerational household than married older women or older men (DaVanzo and Chan, 1994).

Urban areas in Asian countries is founded that higher housing cost which is the influence of coresidence patterns. This housing cost in urban Malaysia has enforced coresidence patterns with a small part of areas high density of coresidence (DaVanzo and Chan, 1994). Similarly, coresidence with adult children in India is founded one type of family tradition where family members are attached and involved in family activities both in rural and urban areas.

The number of children an older person has a higher livelihood and high status for both older man and women in societies. In patriarchal societies, the son must support his aged parents, and more than one son of older women have a higher sense of livelihood with lower levels of living alone. In developing countries, the higher socioeconomic status as a form of lower likelihood of living alone is more important than in developed countries (Chaudhuri and Roy, 2009).

A study by Bethel et al., (1999) found that Taiwan, China, India and Singapore appeared to be a higher proportion of older parents prefer to living with their married son than the married daughter. Therefore, in these countries has found a strong son preference for coresidence with their married children (Mary Beth et al. 1999). Ruggles and Heggeness (2008) using data from Demographic and Health Survey in 15 developing countries have found that an intergenerational coresidence with children of all the countries is decline due to the economic growth of the countries (Ruggles and Heggeness, 2008).

Studies show that living with children and grandchildren in the multigenerational household is high among the uneducated and widowed women. It is expected that older persons who are highly educated are more likely to live alone. The educational statuses of older parents are negatively associated with coresidence because of attitudes and income of older parents. Similarly, it also found that an older person who has higher income have less likely to live with their children (DaVanzo and Chan, 1994).

The joint family system has found to have a significant effect on coresidence of older parents. Behera and Dasthagir (2015) have shown that high levels of coresidence found among joint families which is a decline in India due to the effect of industrialisation and urbanisation. It is expected that older parents who live in a joint family have a high sense of wellbeing.

## **Conceptual framework**

Historically, the family has the responsibility for support and safety, and it is the primary institution to contribute to the well-being of the older person. The literature shows that coresidence of the older person influences by various micro and macro factors. Different kind of demographic, socio-economic and individual factors determined the familial support to the older persons. Most of the study shows that asset, ownership of land, aged, widow, belonging to SC/ST community with no children are more likely lower level of coresidence. In this study, the researcher will be focused on various levels, and various factors impact on coresidence of older person.

## **Research Questions**

What are the levels of family support for older persons in India?

What are the characteristics of older persons who coreside with children or other relatives?

## **Data and Methodology**

Data for this study comes from the Building a Knowledgebase on Population Aging in India (BKPAI, 2011) a nationally representative survey of persons aged 60 and above. BKPAI survey covered various aspects of the older population including demography, social and economic conditions, living arrangements and family relationships, health and access and utilisation of social benefits. The survey was carried out in Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal in India based on these states having a higher percentage of the population in the age group sixty years and above compared to the national average (BKPAI, 2011). The main focus of this study is to understand the levels of family support and who received support from their children in India.

The survey collects different types of support information such as coresidence time and money. Information regarding the coresidence was collected in two ways, currently living status and preferred living arrangement. Firstly, they collect information on types and compositions of living arrangements focus on who lives with whom. Secondly, how many of the older person living with their children, spouse, alone or other relatives. The question was asked of the respondent who is you currently living. The present study analysis is focused on the older person who coreside with their children or other relatives and spouse or alone with their socio-economic characteristics. For regression analysis coresidence coded as a dependent variable. Simultaneously, living alone and spouse code as 0 and living with children, and other relative code as 1.

Coresidence of the older person can be determined (Independent variables) by multiple factors such as demographics (age, sex, place of residence, marital status, number of children), socio-economic characteristic (caste, religion, education, wealth index). Marital status was divided into three categories i.e., married, widowed and others. The education-related information was collected; the respondents were asked about completed years of schooling. It also included self-rated health, Activity of Daily Living (ADL), and abuse history of the older person after age 60 and social benefit.

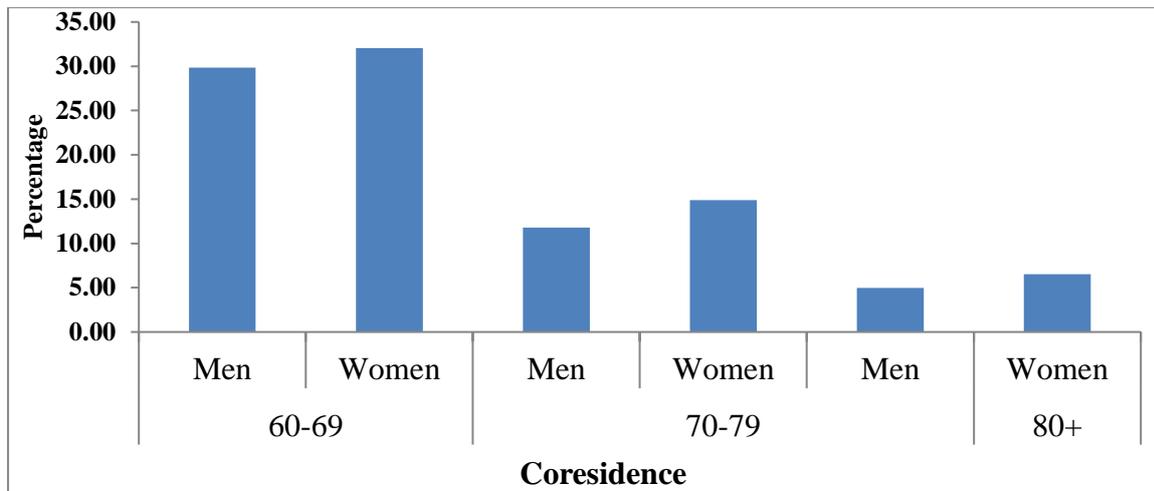
## Findings

The traditionally family members provide the required support to the older person in India. Table 1 found that 77.7 percent of the older persons coreside with their children and other relatives and 22.3 percent of older persons do not coreside with their children. Among the men 76.5 percent were coreside, and 78.9 percent of women were coreside with their children. The probability of older men has higher chances to coreside with their spouse or living alone than older women. Further, the study found that urban Indian older persons are more likely to coreside with their children than the rural counterpart.

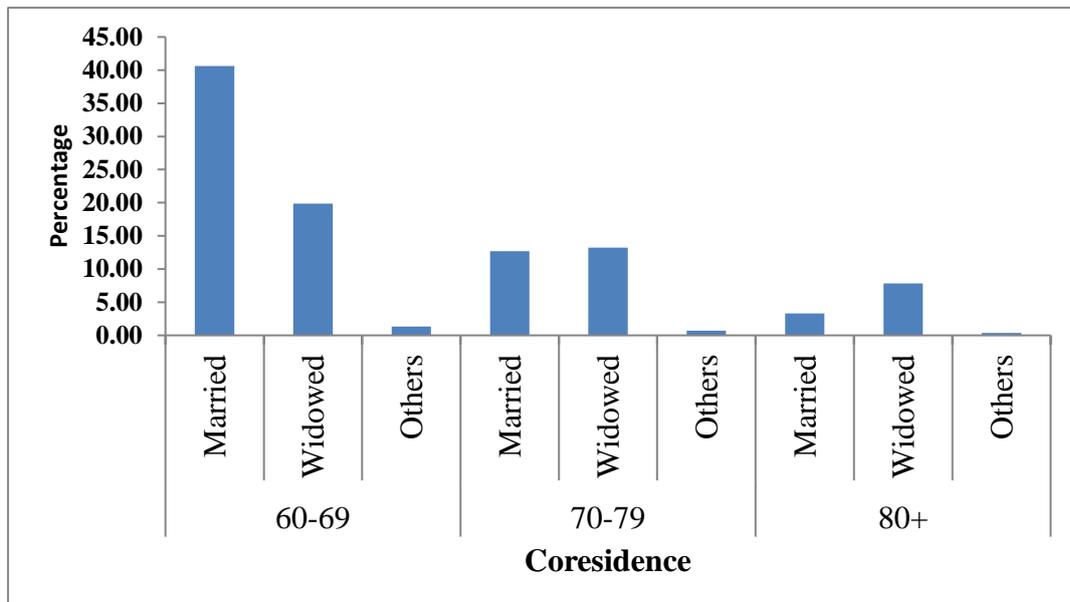
**Table 1: Percentage distribution of the older person by Coresidence according to their residence and sex in India, 2011 (N= 9849)**

Coresidence	Rural			Urban			Total		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
<b>Do not coreside</b>	24.1	22.4	23.2	21.8	17.8	19.6	23.5	21.1	22.3
<b>Coresidence</b>	75.9	77.6	76.8	78.2	82.2	80.4	76.5	78.9	77.7
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<b>Total Number</b>	2,451	2,685	5,136	2,219	2,494	4,713	4,670	5,179	9,849

**Figure 1:** Coresidence percentage distribution of the older persons by age and sex



**Figure 2:** Coresidence percentage distribution of the older persons by age and marital status



The binary logistic regression is used to understand what factors determine the coresidence of older persons. Table 2 describes the demographic characteristics by coresidence of the older persons. Different age group shows that the oldest old (70 to 79 age) elderly has a negative relationship with their likelihood of coresiding. Older women are more likely to coreside than older men. In particular, coresidence tends to be more prevalence in urban areas than rural areas. This is perhaps due to higher housing cost in urban areas whereby the elderly parents are not in a position to reside separately. In spite of this, the higher coresidence rate in urban areas may also indicate a more traditional attitude towards parent-child coresidence.

Furthermore, coresidence is more often when an older person has been widowed. Muslim older persons are more likely to stay with their children which indicate that their kinship structure is different than the other communities. Besides, the number and sex of the children has an effect on older person's coresidence. The number of sons and daughters are negative associated with coresidence for both sons and daughters.

Table 2: Binary logistic regression analysis on older person Coreside with their children and other relatives by different demographic characteristics (Model-1)

	Coresidence		
	Coef	SE	Significant
<b>Demographic characteristics</b>			
<b>Age (Ref: 60-69)</b>			
70-79	-0.20	0.06	***
80+	0.03	0.10	
<b>Sex (Ref: Men)</b>			
Women	0.23	0.06	***
<b>Place of Residence (Ref: Rural)</b>			
Urban	0.43	0.05	***
<b>Marital status (Ref: Married)</b>			
Widowed	0.89	0.07	***
Others	0.46	0.16	**
<b>Religion (Ref: Hindu)</b>			
Muslim	0.49	0.11	***
Sikh	0.48	0.10	***
Other	-0.11	0.12	
<b>Living Children</b>			
<b>Males (Ref: One male children)</b>			
Two male child	-0.78	0.06	***
More male child	-0.69	0.07	***
<b>Female (Ref: One female children)</b>			
Two female child	-0.05	0.06	
More female child	-0.32	0.07	***
<b>Constant</b>	2.12	0.13	***

Significant levels: \*P<0.05, \*\*P<0.01, \*\*\*P<0.001; Number of observation = 9849; Log likelihood = -4807.9397; Pseudo R<sub>2</sub> =0.0531

Table 3 presents describes the differences in health and functional status by coresidence of the older persons. Older persons who are in poor health need more assistance from their children and are more likely to coreside with their children. Those parents who are excellent and have good health are negatively significant to coreside with their children. An older person who lives with their children and others may be suffering from vision and memory disability. Furthermore, older persons who need at least one ADL assistance are more likely to coresidence with their children. Older persons who have faced abuse after sixty years of age are less likely to coreside with their children.

Table 3: Binary logistic regression analysis on older person coreside with their children and other relatives by health and functional characteristics (Model-2)

	Coresidence		
	Coef	SE	Significant
<b>Health and Functional Characteristics</b>			
<b>Self-rated Health (Ref: Good)</b>			
Excellent/ Very good	-0.26	0.08	***
Fair	-0.14	0.06	*
Poor	-0.19	0.08	*
<b>Vision (Ref: No disability)</b>			
Vision disability	0.22	0.05	***
<b>Memory (Ref: No disability)</b>			
Memory disability	0.33	0.06	***
<b>ADL(Ref: Do not need any assistance)</b>			
Need at least one assistance	0.53	0.12	***
<b>Abuse history (Ref: Never)</b>			
After 60 year	-0.56	0.10	***
In the last month	-0.12	0.11	
<b>Constant</b>	1.58	0.14	***

Significant levels: \*P<0.05, \*\*P<0.01, \*\*\*P<0.001; Number of observation = 9849; Log likelihood = -5005.897; Pseudo R<sub>2</sub> = 0.0141

Table 4 depicts the socioeconomic characteristic and coresidence of older persons. Educational status showed a strong negative association with coresidence. An older person who has higher wealth quintiles is more likely to coreside with their children. When an older person is active in his work is less likely to coresidence with one's children. Similarly, an older person who is receiving a social pension is less likely to coresidence with their children.

Table 4: Binary logistic regression analysis on older person Coreside with their children and other relatives by socio-economic characteristics (Model-3)

	Coresidence		
	Coef	SE	Significant
<b>Socio-economic characteristics</b>			
<b>Education (Ref: None)</b>			
1-4 Years	-0.09	0.09	
5-7 Years	-0.34	0.09	***
8+ Years	-1.23	0.08	***
<b>Wealth Index (Ref: Lowest)</b>			
Second	0.86	0.07	***
Middle	1.37	0.08	***
Fourth	2.05	0.09	***
Highest	2.37	0.10	***
<b>Employment (Ref: Not currently working)</b>			
Currently work	-0.17	0.06	**
<b>Social Benefits</b>			
Receive pension	-0.43	0.08	***
<b>Constant</b>	0.64	0.05	***

Significant levels: \*P<0.05, \*\*P<0.01, \*\*\*P<0.001; Number of observation = 9849; Log likelihood = -4639.7763; Pseudo R<sub>2</sub> = 0.0862

## Conclusion

The current study provides information on levels of family supports and who need supports among the elderly. Coresidence with children indicates that a large proportion of the elderly are living with their children and other relatives and the majority of them were economically dependent on others. Traditionally, family members were providing support to the older parents; however it is breaking down due to the nuclearisation of the family. It has led to force older people to live alone. Additionally, there may be cultural norms that Muslim older person are more likely to coreside with their children compared with other religious groups. This indicates that the Muslim community have different kinship structure than Hindu community.

It is important to know that those older persons, women, and widows, who are less educated and higher wealth index, are more likely to coreside with their children. A wealth of the older persons indicates that they are more likely to coreside with their children where financially strongly older person are more likely to coresidence with their children.

Health and functional disability of older persons is an important indicator. An older person who is healthy is less likely to coreside. Disable older persons especially those who are

suffering from vision and memory problems are more likely to coreside. It could mean that these vulnerable older persons need more support from their children. In the case of ADL support, a higher proportion of older persons needs at least one assist. Similarly, those older persons who have faced abuses in the last one month are less likely to coreside.

A highly educated older person is negatively associated with coresidence as it does not correlate with modern attitude due to income, working status and saving. Simultaneously, currently working older person has similar types of attitude toward living alone. Furthermore, they receive pensions which significantly reduce the likelihood of coresidence with their adult children.

It is reasonable that even with the rapid economic development in India, majority of the older persons coreside with their children, which perhaps is a part of parents early investment to secure the support when they are in need i.e., in their elderly life. Moreover, it is a cultural norm that older persons should coreside with their children.

## References

Attias-Donfut, C., Ogg, J., & Wolff, F. C. (2005). European patterns of intergenerational financial and time transfers. *European Journal of Ageing* 2(3),161-173.

B, Nayar P. K. (1999). *Changing role of the family in the care of the old*. (A. P. Bali, Ed.) New Delhi: Inter-India Publications.

Behera, P., & Dasthagir, G. K., (2015). Elderly in joint family: a sociological exegesis of intergenerational connectivity in urban India. *The Journal of Social science today*, 3(2).

Cameron, L. A., & Cobb-Clark, D. (2008). Do Coresidence and Financial Transfers from the Children Reduce the Need for Elderly Parents to Works in Developing Countries? *Journal of Population Economics*, 21(4), 1007-1033.

Census of India. (2011). Government of India.

Chekki, D. A. (1996). Family values and family change. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 27(2), 409-413.

Davanzo, J., H. Dogo, and C. Grammich. 2011. "Demographic Trends, Policy Influences, and Economic Effects in China and India through 2025." RAND Working Paper.

Jadhav Apoorva, Sathyanarayana K.M., Sanjay Kumar, James K.S. (2013). "Living Arrangements of the Elderly in India: Who lives alone and what are the patterns of familial support?" Living arrangement and its effect on older people in ageing societies IUSSP 2013 Busan, Korea.

Kim, J., Choi, S., Chatterjee, S., & Kim, H. (2012). The motivation for intergenerational time and financial transfers. *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal*, 40(4), 373-397.

Kiyosi Hiroshima (1997). "Projection of living arrangements of the elderly in Japan: 1990-2010", *Genus*, 53(1/2), 79-111.

Lamb Sarah (2000). *White sarees and sweet mangoes: Ageing, Gender and Body in North India*, Berkeley, University of California Press.

Martin, L. (1990). Changing Intergenerational Family Relations in East Asia. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*,510, 102-114.

- Martin, L. (1990). Changing Intergenerational Family Relations in East Asia. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 510, 102-114.
- Martin, L.G. (1989). "Living Arrangements of the Elderly in Fiji, Korea, Malaysia and Philippines." *Demography* 26(4):627-643.
- Nandal D. S., R. S. Khatri and R. S. Kadian (1987). "Ageing problems in the Structural Context", in M. L. Sharma and T. M. Dak (eds.) *Ageing in India*. Ajanta Publications, New Delhi. 106- 16.
- Panigrahi, A. (2009). "Determinants of Living Arrangements of Elderly in Orissa: An Analysis." *ISEC Working Paper Series* (228).
- Ruggles, S., & Heggeness, M. (2008). Intergenerational coresidence in developing countries. *Population and development review*, 34(2), 253-281.
- Shuman T. (1988). "The Changing Urban Family and Its Implications for the Elderly in United States 1991", *Aging and Urbanization Proceedings of The United Nations International Conference on Ageing Population in the Context of Urbanization*, Sendai (Japan), 12- 16, 279- 87.
- Townsend Peter (1963). "The family life of Old people- an enquiry in East London", Cox & Wyman Ltd., Pelican Books, London.