

CHAPTER-III

SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF THE RESPONDENTS

This chapter primarily deals with the personal and social characteristics of the respondents, such as age, sex, marital status, caste, religion, educational qualification, after and pre-retirement occupation, professional, non-professional, and joint and nuclear family dwellers, monthly income of the respondents after the age of 60, respondents' size of household, respondents' socio-economic dependent after the age of 60, etc. Highlighting these aspects, in this chapter, an attempt has been made to describe the socio-economic background of the respondents under study. In any social science research, the analysis of the socio-economic background of the respondents is very important because it facilitates an understanding of the social and economic conditions of the respondents and helps to study the personality pattern of the individuals. Without having clear knowledge about the social background of the respondents it is almost impossible to interpret their problems since one is closely related to the other. The majority of the social problems are the creation of the social structure. So, the problems faced by the elderly are also having a close link with the social structure to which she belongs. Personality and the behavior of an individual are shaped by the culture and society in which she is born and brought up. So, while interpreting the problems of the rural elderly, it is considered very necessary to have a good look at the respondents' social-economic background so that their problem can be understood in a true sense. Therefore, the above-mentioned characteristics have been studied to find out the similarities and differences among the respondents. The factors which are highlighted in

this chapter have a direct bearing on the present study. Accordingly, the data which was obtained through the interview schedule is tried to elaborate in this chapter.

3.1: Age:

Age is an important factor in any type of social science research. Generally an individual's working capacity, interests, needs, aspirations, philosophy towards life, knowledge, experiences, etc. all these depends upon his or her age factor. Therefore, the age of a person not only reflects his or her mentality, his or her physical and mental maturity but also reflects one's experience in life. The age classification is considered not because age is an important status determining factor, but also an important aspect of demographic characteristics in a social structure. "The age factor is a matter of universal concern. The population of the aged, 60 years and above is rapidly increasing all over the world and this increase is more pronounced in modern India. Although, different criteria have been adopted by various authors to determine the onset of old age, in many social situations chronological age is considered for demarcating the elderly"(Venkateswarlu V. and Raju M. Lakshmipathi, 2007). The age distribution of the respondents is presented below:

Table-3.1.A:
Percentage Distribution of the Respondents on the Basis of Age

Sl. No.	Age	Respondent
1	60-65	104 (52.0%)
2	65-70	60(30%)
3	70-75	25(12.5%)
4	75-80	8(4%)
5	80+	3 (1.5%)
Total		200 (100%)

It is evident from Table -3.1.A: that majority of the respondents (52.0%) were in the age group of 60-65 followed by 65-70 years. Again, 12.5 % was in the age group of 70-74; 4.0 % was in the age group of 75-80 and finally, only 1.5% of respondents constituted above 80 years.

So, the majority of the respondents belonged to the age group of 60-65 followed by the age group of 65-70 and only a few percent constituted 80 and above.

3.2: Types of Family:

The family occupies a unique position in human society. Its' significance however varies from society to society, and within the same society among different groups and individuals occupying various positions and statuses. Family provides individual security and emotional satisfaction through a network of inter-personal relations, implicit reciprocal duties, and obligations among its members. In this context, the type of family of the elderly is an important factor as their inter-personal relations and social security vary according to the type of family. Hence, the researcher broadly classified the family into two types namely- the joint and nuclear family.

Table-3.2.A:

Percentage Distribution of the Respondents by the 'Type of Family'

Sl. No	Type of Family	Respondents
1	joint	109 (54.55%)
2	nuclear	91 (45.5%)
Total		200 (100%)

Table-3.2.A: clearly reveals that the majority of the respondents (54.5%) were living in a joint family as compared to the nuclear family (45.5%).

3.3: Types of Profession:

The profession is considered one of the important factors in modern society. It plays an important role in the maintenance of one's status in society and the socio-economic adjustment in old age. One's economic security in old age largely depends on the type of profession he holds in the pre-retirement period. So, in the discussion of socioeconomic status in old age, it is necessary to give a look at the type of profession one holds. For this purpose, the respondents were divided into professionals and non-professionals.

Table-3.3.A:
Percentage Distribution of the Respondents by type of 'Profession'

Sl. No	Type of Profession	Respondent
1	Professional	25 (12.5%)
2	Non— professional	175 (87.5%)
Total		200 (100%)

From Table-3.3.A: it is evident that the majority of the respondents were non-professional and it consisted of 87.5% of the total respondents and professional constituted only 12.5%.

3.4: Pension Status of the Respondents:

For good adjustment in old age, the elderly must be economically sound. Naturally, after retirement those who have the provision of getting pension, may have fewer problems in

adjustment in old age in comparison to the non-pensioner. Therefore both the pensioner and non-pensioner retirees were selected as samples for the study. The following table shows the distribution of the respondents on the basis of their pension status.

Table-3.4.A:
Percentage Distribution of the Respondents by “Pension status”

Sl. no.	Type of Pensioner	Respondents
1	pensioner	100 (50%)
2	Non- pensioner	100 (50%)
Total		200 (100%)

From Table- 3.4.A: it is evident that there were 50 % of elderly respondents was pensioners and 50% were not getting any pension benefits from governmental sources.

3.5: Marital Status:

Marriage is an institution which admits men and women to family life. It is a stable relationship in which a man and a woman are socially permitted to have children implying the right to sexual relations. Edward Westermarck said, “Marriage as the more or less durable connection between male and female, lasting beyond the mere act of propagation till after the birth of offspring.” (*Bhusan.V, 1995*). However, marital status is an important variable in Sociology, particularly in studying problems of old age. The problems of the married, unmarried, and widow may be in variation keeping in view their

marital status. Marital status helps in analyzing the differential response and behavior patterns of the retirees falling in different marital status categories.

Table-3.5.A:
Marital Status and 'Respondents'

SL. No.	Marital status	Respondent
1	Married	143 (71.5)
2	Unmarried	2(1%)
3	Widow	53 (26.5%)
4	Divorce	2 (1%)
Total		200(100%)

Table- 3.6.A: clearly shows that out of the total 200 respondents, 71.5% of them were married; 26.5% of aged respondents were widowed and there were only 1% of the respondents who remained unmarried, and 1% of them were divorcee.

3.6: Religion:

Religion plays a very important role in the life of an individual as well as in society. It has great consequences on one's social background. In social life, thoughts and ideas of the people are determined to a large extent by religion. Commenting upon the social aspect of the religion Nordskong says, "Religion is a social institution, the product of society and

evidence of social emphasis in religion is seen in social service, neighborliness and humanitarian or social ethics” (Nordskong, 1960). It is a religion that can mould the attitude and outlook of an individual towards others and the whole world. In many instances, the role and status of the different age groups of a religious community are determined by the concerned religion of the community. For example, the *ashrama* system of the Hindus has stated the different roles an individual has to play in the different phases of his/her life. As Bhatia has pointed, "The traditional Hindu view of life recognizes a withdrawal from society as an approach towards old age, the '*ashrama*' theory has one positive feature. It is a theory of social organization from the point of age-stratification and age-based roles and social sanctions and allocation of facilities." (Bhatia H.S., 1983). The following table depicts the religion of the respondents.

Table-3.6.A:
Percentage Distribution of the Respondents by ‘Religion’

Sl. No	Religion	Respondent
1	Hindu	187 (93.5%)
2	Muslim	13 (6.5%)
Total		200(100%)

Table-3.6.A: demonstrates the predominance of Hindus in the sample population. An overwhelming majority (93.5%) of the sample elderly were Hindus. Muslims were few in number, constituting only 6.5% of the sample population.

3.7: Caste:

Caste is an integral part and occupies a unique position in the Indian social structure. It is closely related to the life of an individual in the social, economic, and religious aspects. Indian society is hierarchically divided on the basis of caste. The caste is an inseparable aspect of Indian society. In India, caste is a provision for the regulation of social control and determination of individual status. Caste being one of the basic elements shaping the power has significant implications on social structure (*Dhar, P.K. 2005*). It is a deep-rooted and long-lasting social institution in India. So, there is no doubt that the problems of the aged are positively or negatively correlated with the caste structure of society. In other words, the problems of the elderly belonging to different caste categories may differ from each other. The following table projects the data on caste wise distribution of the respondents.

**Table-3.7.A:
Percentage Distribution of the Respondents by ‘Caste’**

Sl. No.	Caste	Respondents
1	General	44 (22%)
2	OBC	125(62.5%)
3	MOBC	7 (3.5%)
4	SC	16 (8%)
5	ST	8 (3.5%)
Total		200 (100%)

Table- 3.7.A: shows that O.B.C. respondents (62.5%) were found to be more than half of the total respondents followed by General category (22.0%), S.C. 8%, and S.T. 4%.

Significant percentages of the respondents represented the OBC and General category as probably due to the fact that they could afford to have better facilities and other amenities of life.

3.8: Educational Status:

Education plays an important role in the life of an individual. It is considered an important tool in bringing social and economic aspects of society. As an instrument of knowledge, education plays an important role in the economic and social growth of both individuals and society. It also helps to determine individuals' status and prestige in society. Education has brought about phenomenal changes in every aspect of man's life. Emphasizing the role of education Francis J. Brown remarks, "Education is a process which brings about changes in the behavior of society. It is a process that enables every individual to effectively participate in the activities of the society, and to make a positive contribution to the progress of the society." (*Shankar Rao C. N., 2003*). The problems of the aged may vary from each other on the basis of their educational qualification. "Education is another important factor which is regarded as significant in exercising an influence on attitudes, opinions, beliefs, and behavior of an individual" (*Sati P.N.1989*). "Education is considered a very important factor in modern society. As Harold L. Sheppard states 'Education, of course, may affect the individual chances for being in a given occupation, which in turn predetermines other life chances, including health, status, job, security, etc. (*Sheppard, 1976, 289*). The cumulative experience and knowledge necessary for political, economic, social, and other development are to be passed on to new generations, or to the people who need this knowledge. Dissemination of knowledge from one to another is possible only through education." (*Venkateswarlu.V. & Lakshmipatthi. M. Raju, 2007*). The distribution of the educational categories is shown in the following table.

**Table-3.8.A:
Percentage Distribution of the Respondents by 'Education'**

Sl. No.	Education	Respondents
1	ME	19 (9.5%)
2	HSLC	53 (26.5%)
3	HS	52 (26%)
4	GRADUATE	72 (36%)
5	POSTGRADUATE	3 (1.5%)
6	Ph. D	1 (0.5%)
Total		200(100%)

From the Table-3.8.A: it is evident that majority of the respondents (36.0%) were Graduates; M.E. 9.5%; H.S.L.C. 26.5%; H.S. 26.0%; Post Graduate 1.5%. Post Graduate and Ph.D. together constituted only 2%.

3.9: Main Problems of elderly women after the age of 60:

Social problems are undesirable situations, conditions, or behavior concerning society, social institutions, social relationships, social structure, and social organization, etc. It refers to the existence of matters which require settlement or solution. There is a difficulty in settlement or solution of that matter and the non-solution of the matter is causing perplexity. The rising proportion of the aged in the population structure and the declining role and status of the aged in the present society, as well as their degradation in the physical and mental health status due to the increasing age, creates so many problems for the aged. The following table depicts the percentage distribution of the aged by their different problems.

**Table -3.9.A:
Problems in Old Elderly and Respondents**

Sl. No	Problems	Respondent
1	Health	62 (31%)
2	Economic	7(3.5%)
3	social adjustment	36(18%)
4	health and economic	31(15.5%)
5	health and adjustment	25(12.5%)
6	economic and adjustment	9(4.5%)

7	health, economic and adjustment	30(15%)
Total		200(100%)

From Table- 3.9.A: it is evident that the majority of the total respondents (31%) had 'health problem; 18 percent had 'social adjustment problem'; 15.5 had both 'health and economic problems'; 12.5 percent had 'health and adjustment problems'; 4.5 percent had 'economic and adjustment problems' and 15 percent had all the three problems i.e. 'health, economic and adjustment'.

3.10: Respondents' view regarding their Best Help in Old Age:

Due to the deterioration in physical and mental health, many of the elderly have to depend on their family members or others in every aspect of their life. After the age of 60 with the loss of their economic status, they become dependent on others. Traditionally it is considered the moral responsibility of the family to take care of the old people. But with the change in the social structure, the role of the traditional family system have also been subjected to change. In such a changing situation, it is very important to know who acts as the best help for the elders in their old age.

Table-3.10.A:
Percentage Distribution of the Respondents' view on 'Best Help'

Sl. No.	Best Help	Total
1	spouse	61 (30.5%)
2	god	53(26.5%)
3	self	29(14.5%)
4	sons	54(27%)
5	daughter	3(1.5%)
Total		200(100%)

Table- 3.10.A: shows that out of a total of 200 respondents 30.5 percent respondents stated that 'spouse' was the best help in their old age; 26.5 percent considered 'god' as their best help; 14.5 percent believed in 'themselves'; 27 percent in 'sons' and only 1.5 percent considered 'daughters' as their best help.

3.11: Main Support of Elderly women after the age of 60:

Table-3.11.A:
Main Support in Old Age and Respondents' view

Sl. No	Children are the main support	Respondent

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1	No	79(39.5%)
2	Yes	121(60.5%)
Total		200(100%)

Again Table- 3.11.A: reveals that 60.5% of the respondents stated that children were the main support in their old age. A total of 39.5% did not consider their children as the main support in their old age.

3.12: Respondents' View regarding the Responsibility of Taking Care of the Elderly women:

With the advent of industrialization, a tremendous transformation took place in social institutions that worked as a welfare institution for the aged a few decades ago. The education and higher aspirations by the young gave way to migration from the native places to big cities leaving behind the first generation to find for themselves with minimal means of survival. Today, the elderly are treated as a burden. The changes in the value system and institutional set-up have had a negative impact on the old. Here, an attempt was made to know the respondents' views regarding the responsibility to take care of the rural elderly women. The following table depicts the percentage distribution of the respondent's view in this regard.

Table-3.12.A:

Percentage Distribution of the Respondents' View regarding elderly women Responsibility

Sl. No.	Care of the rural elderly	Respondent
1	Son	91(45.5%)
2	Daughter	8 (4%)
3	Both	57(28.5%)
4	themselves	44(22%)
Total		200 (100%)

From the Table-3.12.A: it is evident that a large section of the total respondents (45.5%) were of the view that 'son' should take care of the elderly mother; Only 4.0% viewed that daughters should take the responsibilities of their old mother. On the other hand, 28.5% had stated that both sons and daughters should take responsibility for their elderly mother, and 22.0% of respondents viewed that they should take care of themselves.

3.13: Respondents' Awareness of Old Age Home:

Old Age Home is a Western concept still unfamiliar in India. It means the segregation of the old among their peers. There is a debate between 'age- group's isolation' and 'social integration' in the west (*Dandekar. K. 1996*). However, the

importance of old age home in India is now gaining importance due to the changing structure of the society as a result of industrialization especially with the disintegration of the traditional Indian joint family system which was previously considered as the supportive and welfare institution for the elderly. In a study, D. Bansod and B. Pawan stated, 'the reasons cited by the elderly for shifting to the old age home were many and varied from one individual to another but the four most important reasons were: poverty, no support from the children, any caregiver and loneliness. Most of the elderly persons in old age home were from a rural background, which did not have any land and most of whom were illiterate, widowed, and economically dependent.' (Bansod, D. & Paswan, B. 2006). In this study, the respondent was asked about their awareness of old age homes.

Table-3.13.A:

Awareness of Old Age Home and Respondents

Sl. No.	Awareness of Old Age Home	Respondent
1	No	73(36.5%)
2	Yes	127(63.5%)
Total		200(100%)

Table -3.13.A: clearly shows that 63.5% of the total respondents stated that they have awareness towards old age homes whereas 36.5% had negatively responded about the awareness towards old age homes.

3.14: The willingness of the Elderly women to join in Old Age Home:**Table no-3.14.A:****Willing to Join in Old Elderly Home and ‘Respondents’**

Sl. No	Respondents’ view	Respondent
1	no	166 (83%)
2	Yes	34 (17%)
Total		200 (100%)

The data in Table- 3.14.A: shows that majority of the respondents (83.0%) showed their unwillingness to join in an old age home.

3.15: Living Arrangement of the Elderly:**Table-3.15.A:****Respondents’ View on Best Place to Live in Old Age**

Sl. No.	Best place to live in old age	Respondent
1	with son & family	133(66.5%)
2	with daughter	3 (1.5%)
3	Alone	38 (19%)

4	in old age home	17(8.5%)
5	With others' family member	3 (1.5%)
6	only with Husband	1(0.5%)
7	both sons and daughters	5 (2.5%)
Total		200(100%)

The data in Table 3.15.A: shows that a higher percentage of the respondents (66.5%) liked to live with the 'sons and family members'.

Again, 1.5% liked to live with daughters; 19% of the respondent liked to live alone; a total of 8.5% of the respondents wished to live in an Old Age Home. Only 1.5% wanted to live with others' families, 0.5% only with husband, and 2.5 percent with both sons and daughters.

3.16: Participation of the Elderly in Different Activities:

The data from the field shows that the majority of the aged stated about their engagement in household work.

A good number of the respondents had stated about their playing with a grandchild. A vast majority of the respondents used to go gossiping at friends' residences in their available leisure time.

3.17: Result and Discussion:

It is evident from the study that the majority of the respondents (52.0%) were in the age group of 60-64 followed by 65-69 years. Again, 12.5 percent of the respondents in the age group of 70-74; 4.0 percent in the age group of 75-79, and finally only 1.5 percent of respondents constituted above 80 years. The majority of the respondents were (54.5%) living in a joint family as compared to the nuclear family (45.5%). The profession wise distributions of the respondents revealed that 87.5 percent of the respondents' were non-professional and professional retirees' constituted only 12.5 percent. Respondents were also distributed according to their status as- pensioner and non-pensioner and there was equal representation from both the categories.

The marital status of the respondents revealed that 71.5 percent of respondents were married at the time of the study. Against 1.0 percent unmarried respondent, there was 26.5 percent of the respondents was 'widow'. Generally in our society, women are forced to early marriage and generally, their husbands are older in age than their age. Naturally, in that situation, women are left alone by their husbands in this world. In such a situation female aged may face more loneliness problems in their old age in the absence of their life-partner.

The study revealed that 93.5 percent of the respondents belonged to the Hindu community and 6.5 percent were from the Muslim community in the rural setting. There was no respondent from another religious community.

The caste-wise distribution of the respondents revealed that 62.5 percent of the respondents belonged to OBC, 22.0 percent respondent from the General category, SC constituted 8.0 percent, and finally, ST constituted 4.0 percent.

In order to govern the educational status of the respondents in the sample, the study revealed that 36.0 percent of respondents were graduates, only 1.5 percent of respondents were post-graduate.

The majority of the respondents (31%) viewed that their main problem after the age of 60 was health related problems. It may be due to the lack of medical facilities in the rural setting. Again, 18.0 percent of the respondents in the rural society had social adjustment problems and a good number of respondents had to face economic problems. 15.5 percent of the respondents had both health and economic while 12.5 percent of the respondents had both health and economic adjustment problems. 15.0 percent in the rural setting had health, economic, and adjustment problems.

Respondents were asked about 'whom' they considered as their 'best help' in old age. 30.5 percent of the respondent considered their 'spouse' as their 'best help' 26.5 percent of the respondents considered 'god' as their best help while 14.5 percent of the respondents had faith in their own self, 27.0 percent respondent a considered their son/s as best help.

60.5 percent of the respondent viewed that child was the main support in old age. It denotes the existence of moral values and a positive attitude towards the aged in rural society.

In this study, an effort was made to familiar the respondent's view about who should take the responsibility of the elderly women. It was asked to the respondents whether their sons, daughters, both sons, and daughters or they should take the responsibility of their own. In this regard, 45.5 percent of the aged stated that sons should take responsibility for the elderly mother.

A greater percentage of the respondent i.e. 63.5% had their awareness about old age homes. 83.0 percent of respondents were disinterested to join in an old age home.

It was found that the majority of the aged stated about their engagement in household work. Majority i.e. 65% of the respondents had stated about their playing with a grandchild. A vast majority of the rural respondents i.e. 78.0% used to go gossiping at friends' residence.

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