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### Residential interiors for elderly in Kittur taluk

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#### Abstract

With changing times, the joint families are replaced by nuclear families and the current generation of old, people do not want to be dependent on their family members. Staying in their own houses makes them lonely by themselves which results in depression. Retirement housing gives them the sense of ownership of their own house but at the same time caters to their various need. Retirement housing community is a type of housing which houses the senior citizen after retirement or after a given age to aid their living with special design elements in the coming years. The study was conducted in Kittur taluk of Belgavi district with sample size of 60 men and women above the age 60 years. The purposive random sampling technique was adopted to select the sample for the study. The study concluded that, related to physical health problems of elderly, poor vision was found to be a major health problem among both men and women followed by leg pain. Majority of the respondents faced problem with slippery tiles in house and size of the basin in bathroom and difficulty to use Indian toilets. Elderly men and women come across with insufficient lighting and ventilation problems in bathroom and water closet.

**Keywords:** Elderly, housing, health, bathroom

#### Introduction

From ancient times, the elderly have always found a revered place in the families where all live together. With changing times, the joint families are replaced by nuclear families and the current generation of old, people do not want to be dependent on their family members. Staying in their own houses makes them lonely by themselves which results in depression. Retirement housing gives them the sense of ownership of their own house but at the same time caters to their various need. Retirement housing community is a type of housing which houses the senior citizen after retirement or after a given age to aid their living with special design elements in the coming years. These housing provides the elderly with the privacy and independence as well as providing them with a holistic environment where they can interact with people of their age group and stay busy with various activities that promote their psychological as well as physiological health. Architects and designers need to incorporate ways to release stress and encourage relaxation into their conceptualization of a given built environment, especially when it comes to creating living spaces for the elderly. Factors such as lighting, basophilic design, and color theory all needs to be incorporated when thoughtfully designing and shaping the interior environment for the elderly.

In home, bathroom and toilets are the most hazardous room in the house in terms of fall related injury and death. In India 21 per cent of falls occur at home and 18.9 per cent of

them occur during bathing. Bathroom hazards include slippery floor, sharp edges, obstacles and poor lighting and ventilation, whereas safety features include rubber mats and grab bars and safety practices, viz., bedroom to bed room area are free from obstacles. Hence this study was undertaken with following objective.

#### Materials and Methods

The present study was conducted in Kittur Taluk in 2024. Keeping in view of the objectives of the study, purposive random sampling technique was adopted to select the sample for the study. A total sample of 60 elderly population including both men and women aged 60 years and above residing in Kittur taluk were selected as the sample for the study. The pre-structured schedule was formulated to collect the required data for the present study.

#### Results and Discussion

The data on demographic profile of selected respondents is presented in Table 1. Among the three categories of age group, the 63.33 per cent of the respondents belonged to age between 60 to 68 followed by 20.00 per cent of them belongs to the age 69 to 77 and only 16.66 per cent of them belongs to age group between 78 to 86. Similar findings were reported by Bhakshi *et al.* (2001) <sup>[1]</sup>, where 50 per cent of the sample under study in Ludhiana belonged to the age of 60 to 65 years. With respect to the gender 76.66 per cent of them are Male and only 23.33 per cent respondents were

female.

**Table 1:** Demographic profile of the respondents N=60

Particular	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Age</b>		
60-68	38	63.33
69-77	12	20.00
78-86	10	16.66
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	46	76.66
Female	14	23.33
<b>Education</b>		
Illiterate	14	23.33
Less than Graduation	22	36.66
Graduation	06	10.00
Post Graduation	02	3.33
Other	16	26.66
<b>Occupation</b>		
Agriculture	22	36.66
Govt. employee	08	13.33
Private employee	28	46.66
Business	02	3.33
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	44	46.66
Unmarried	02	3.33
Widow	14	23.33
<b>Family Size</b>		
Less than 3	18	30.00
3 to 5	38	63.33
More than 5	04	6.66

Regarding educational level of the selected elderly, it was found that, 36.66 per cent of respondents were less than graduates, while 26.66 per cent respondents were completed other courses such as Diploma and other diploma courses and 23.33 per cent of them were illiterate and 10 per cent of them were graduates and only 3.33 per cent of them were business. These results are supported by the study conducted by Sandhu *et al.* (2002) [2], where only least percentage of the respondents was illiterate.

Among respondents, majority (46.66) of the respondents was married and followed by 23.33 per cent of respondents were widow and only 3.33 per cent of them were unmarried. With respect to the family size, 63.33 per cent having family size 3 to 5 followed by 30.00 per cent of them were less than 3 family members in their house and only 6.66 per cent of respondents were living with more than 5 members.

**Table 2:** General health problems of the respondents N=60

Health Problems	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Poor vision	54	90.00
General weakness	38	63.33
Hearing problems	46	25.55
Leg pain	52	86.66
Back pain	46	25.55
Arm pain	22	36.66
Hypertension	32	53.33
Diabetes	20	83.33
Heart problems	26	43.33
Arthritis	32	53.33
Any other	26	43.33

**Note:** Multiple Answers

The general health problems among the selected elderly are shown in Table 2. Regarding the physical health problems of elderly, poor vision was found to be a major health problem among both men and women (90.00%) followed by leg pain (86.66%), Diabetes (83.33%), general weakness (63.33%), equal per cent *i.e* 53.33 per cent of the respondents facing Arthritis and Hypertension. 43.33 per cent of the respondents facing heart problems and other health problems like headache, loss of appetite etc. while back pain and hearing problems were the least problems among the selected respondents.

**Table 3:** Existing condition of house of the selected respondents N=60

Parameters	Entrance	Hall	Bed Room	Kitchen
<b>Flooring:</b>				
Slippery	38 (63.33)	26 (43.33)	48(80.00)	46 (76.66)
Non-slippery	22 (36.66)	34 (56.66)	12 (20.00)	07 (23.33)
<b>Wall Finishes</b>				
Distemper	14 (23.33)	-	26 (43.33)	36 (60.00)
Oil Paint	26 (43.33)	42 (70.00)	-	06(10.00)
Plastic Paint(washable)	14 (23.33)	18 (30.00)	34(56.66)	-
Any other	06 (10.00)	-	-	18 (30.00)
<b>Storage</b>				
Wardrobe	-	38 (63.33)	20 (33.33)	-
Any other	-	-	40 (66.66)	60 (100.00)
<b>Other facilities</b>				
Sufficient lighting	60 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	26 (43.33)	22(36.66)
Alarm facility	-	-	-	-
Telephone	-	-	-	-
Proper ventilation	60 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	42 (70.00)	18 (30.00)
Any other	-	-	-	-

**Note:** Multiple Answers

Table 3 indicates the existing condition of the elderly house. With respect to the Flooring majority of the respondents had slippery tiles in Entrance (63.33%), Bedroom (80.00%) and Kitchen (76.66%) and majority of the respondents had non slippery tiles in Hall (56.66%) and followed by 43.33 per cent of the respondents had slippery tiles in Halls followed by 36.66 per cent of the respondents had non-slippery tiles in Entrance, 23.33 per cent of them had non-slippery tiles in kitchen and 20.00 per cent of them had non-slippery tiles in bedroom.

With respect to the wall finishes, 60.00 per cent of the respondents had distemper for kitchen followed by 43.33 per cent in bedroom and only 23.33 per cent in entrance. Regarding, oil paint majority (70.00%) of the respondents had oil paint in hall followed by entrance (43.33%) and kitchen (10.00%). Regarding plastic paint majority of the respondents had plastic paint in Bed room (53.33%) followed by Hall (30.00%) and Entrance (23.33%). Other than all these paints 30 per cent of the respondents had lime in kitchen (30.00%) followed by 10 per cent had lime in Entrance.

With respect to the storage, 63.33 per cent of the respondents had wardrobe facility in hall and followed by bed room (33.33%) other than wardrobe many respondents had other facilities like iron cabod and stone shelf's in bed room (66.66%) and cent per cent of the respondents had stone shelf in kitchen for storage purpose.

With respect to the other facilities, cent per cent of the respondents had sufficient lighting in entrance and hall followed by Bedroom (43.33%) and Kitchen (36.66%). Among selected respondents, cent per cent of them not having alarm and telephone facilities in their house and cent per cent of them having proper ventilation in entrance and hall followed by Bed room (70%) and Kitchen (30.00%).

**Table 4:** Existing Bathroom and water closet in selected respondent house N=60

Particulars	Frequency	
	Yes	No
Mats availability	46 (76.66)	14(23.33)
Flooring slippery	52 (86.66)	08(13.33)
Indian style water closet	38 (63.33)	22(36.66)
Western style water closet	22 (36.66)	38(63.33)
Grab bars for support	42 (70.00)	18(30.00)
Absence of Grab bars	18 (30.00)	42(70.00)
Insufficient Lighting	46 (76.66)	14(23.33)
Insufficient Ventilation	38 (63.33)	22(36.66)
Difficulty to open door	42 (70.00)	18(30.00)
Difficulty to use water tap	38 (63.33)	22(36.66)
Difficulty to use wash basin because of less / more height	54 (90.00)	06(10.00)
Less accessible to light switches	58 (96.66)	02 (3.33)

**Note:** Figures in Parenthesis indicates percentage

Table 4 indicates the existing bathroom and water closet in selected respondent house. More percentage of the respondents (76.66%) had mats in bathroom and water closet and only few per cent (23.33%) of the respondents not having mat facility. However, 86.66 per cent of the respondents had slippery tiles and 13.33 per cent had non-slippery tiles. These results are on par with findings of Kaur and Sharma (2009). Regarding the type of toilet, majority of the selected elderly (63.33%) was having western style water closet and 36.66 per cent having Indian style toilet. Regarding grab bars for support, 70.00 per cent of the elderly having grab bars facility in their house and only 30.00 per cent of them not having grabs for support.

Majority of the respondents had insufficient lighting (76.66%) and only 23.33 per cent had sufficient lighting. Similar trend was observed in ventilation i.e 63.33 per cent had insufficient ventilation and only 36.66 per cent had sufficient ventilation.

With respect to difficulty to open door, majority of the respondents (70.00%) had difficulty in open the toilet and water closet door followed by 30.00 per cent of them had no difficulty in opening the door. similar trend was observed in difficulty to use water tap, 63.33 per cent of them had difficulty in operating the water tap and only 36.66 per cent had no difficulty in operating the water taps.

Majority (90.00%) of the respondents had difficulty to use wash basin because of less / more height and 10.00 per cent of them had no difficulty to use wash basin. Majority (96.66%) of the respondents had problem with less accessible to light switches and only 3.33 per cent not having problem with less accessible to light switches.

## Conclusion

The study provides insights into the demographic profile, general health problems, and living conditions of the elderly population. The findings suggest that:

- Age and Gender:** The majority of respondents (63.33%) fall in the age group of 60-68 years, and 76.66% are males, indicating a higher representation of older males in the sample.
- Health Problems:** Elderly individuals experience a range of health issues, with poor vision (90%), leg pain (86.66%), diabetes (83.33%), and general weakness (63.33%) being the most prevalent.
- Living Conditions:** Many elderly individuals live in homes with hazardous features, such as slippery flooring (76.66% in kitchens and 63.33% in entrance halls) and inadequate lighting and ventilation in bathrooms and water closets.
- Bathroom and Water Closet Conditions:** The majority of respondents (76.66%) have mats in bathrooms and water closets, but 86.66% have slippery tiles, and 63.33% have Western-style water closets.
- Accessibility Issues:** Elderly individuals face difficulties with door opening (70%), water tap operation (63.33%), and wash basin usage due to height issues (90%). Additionally, 96.66% experience problems with inaccessible light switches.

## These findings highlight the need for

- Healthcare Interventions:** Targeted healthcare programs addressing prevalent health issues, such as vision problems, diabetes, and musculoskeletal issues.
- Home Modifications:** Improvements to living conditions, including non-slip flooring, adequate lighting and ventilation, and accessible bathroom facilities.
- Support Systems:** Establishment of support systems, such as grab bars and accessible light switches, to enhance mobility and independence.
- Education and Awareness:** Educating caregivers and family members about the needs and challenges faced by the elderly population.

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