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EXPLORING THE TRANSFORMATIVE SHIFT IN ELDERLY CARE FACILITIES: STRATEGIC AND FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVES FROM A GLOBAL, INDIAN, AND MANGALOREAN CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the historical evolution of age care homes globally, with a specific focus on India and Mangalore, examining their impact on commerce and management. Through archival research and observational data analysis, the study highlights challenges such as a lack of trained staff, poor management structures, and limited specialization in elder care. Recommendations include enhancing training programs, implementing structured management practices, and fostering strategic investments to improve the quality and sustainability of elder care services. Addressing these challenges can lead to a more effective and responsive elder care system, tailored to meet the diverse needs of aging populations.

This paper delves into the historical development of age care homes worldwide, with a specific focus on India and Mangalore, examining their impact on commerce and management. The study utilizes archival research and observational data analysis to highlight challenges such as a lack of trained staff, poor management structures, and limited specialization in elder care. Recommendations include enhancing training programs, implementing structured management practices, and fostering strategic investments to improve the quality and sustainability of elder care services. Addressing these challenges can lead to a more effective and responsive elder care system, tailored to meet the diverse needs of aging populations.

KEY WORDS: *Age care homes, elder care, age care management, Grihasthashrama, Almhouses, Gerontology.*

INTRODUCTION

Dear Nursing Home,

Why are you rejecting me?
Please let me come to your community and be a friend to your residents.

Love,
Potential Volunteer (28)

The concept of age care homes, institutions designed to provide specialized care and support for elderly individuals, has evolved significantly throughout history. This paper explores the historical trajectory of age care homes globally, with a specific focus on India and the city of Mangalore, in the state of Karnataka. By examining the origins, developments, and contemporary trends in elder care provision, this research seeks to uncover insights into the changing dynamics of aging and caregiving across different contexts, while also considering implications for commerce and management in this sector.

The history of care homes in Britain begins in 936, when the first-known almshouse was built in York. King Aethelstan provided funding for it after witnessing clergymen of an earlier incarnation of York Minster using their own money to care for the elderly. Age care homes have roots in ancient civilizations, where familial structures often provided the primary source of elder care. However, industrialization and urbanization led to the emergence of formal institutions. The 20th century saw significant growth in nursing homes, influenced by advancements in healthcare and social welfare policies.

Almshouses proliferated across Europe, serving as communal residences where residents received basic care and support. While initially rooted in religious charity, almshouses evolved over time to accommodate changing social structures and needs. The concept of providing shelter and care for the elderly within a communal setting laid the groundwork for the development of more specialized age care homes in later centuries.

In India, traditions of familial care have long been ingrained, with extended families typically responsible for elders' well-being. Ancient traditions like "Grihasthashrama" and "Pitru Paksha" emphasized familial duties towards elders. However, societal changes such as urbanization and migration have disrupted traditional family structures, increasing the demand for institutionalized elder care. Despite this, the concept of nursing homes, prevalent in Western countries, has only gained

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traction in India in recent decades. Influential social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy laid the groundwork for broader discussions on welfare and humanitarian issues, indirectly contributing to the emergence of elder care institutions.
Mangalore has its own unique history of age care homes. Saint Joseph's Prashant Nivas Charity Institutes, founded in **1898 (1882)** by the Sisters of Charity, (31) have provided a sanctuary for destitute residents for over a century. Saint Anthony's Ashram that was started in **1936 (9).**

Way back in **1948,(33)** Society of Sisters of St Ann of Providence, which runs educational institutions, hospitals and Homes for the aged in different parts of the country, had set up St Ann's Home for the aged at Simon Lane, Mangalore, in order to provide succor for the elderly women. Though taking care of the elderly was not as much of a "problem" in Mangalore as it is now, the society set up the Home in order to create a place with activities and support system for the elderly and to cater to their specific needs. The sisters took care of the health, social, recreational and logistical needs of the inmates of the house.

In terms of commerce and management, the elder care sector presents unique challenges and opportunities. As the global population ages, there is a growing market for age care services, including residential care, healthcare, and support services. This presents opportunities for entrepreneurship, innovation, and investment in the elder care industry. However, managing age care homes requires careful attention to regulatory compliance, quality assurance, financial sustainability, and human resource management. Effective leadership, strategic planning, and operational efficiency are essential for the success of age care facilities.

Recent developments, particularly the COVID-19 pandemic, have highlighted the vulnerabilities within age care homes worldwide. Lessons learned from this crisis underscore the importance of robust disaster preparedness and response strategies in elder care settings. Additionally, there is an increasing focus on leveraging technology and data analytics to improve care delivery, enhance resident safety, and optimize resource allocation in age care facilities.

Through an exploration of these historical narratives and recent developments, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the evolution of age care homes, shedding light on the challenges, opportunities, and best practices in elder care provision across different cultural and geographical contexts, while also considering the commerce and management implications in this dynamic sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The evolution of age care homes has been a topic of significant scholarly interest, with studies examining various aspects such as policy frameworks, management practices, financial sustainability, and entrepreneurial opportunities within this sector. Drawing upon a range of recent literature, this review provides insights into the current understanding of age care homes, both in India and abroad.

Historical Perspectives and Policy Frameworks

Achenbaum (1995) provides a historical account of old age care in the United States, tracing its evolution since the 18th century. This foundational work highlights the shifting societal attitudes towards elder care and the emergence of formalized care settings. Similarly, **Harrington et al. (2020)** shed light on the role of nursing homes as sites of disaster preparedness and response, emphasizing lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. These studies underscore the importance of robust policy frameworks to ensure quality care and resilience in the face of crises.

Entrepreneurial Opportunities and Challenges

The elder care sector in India has witnessed growing interest from entrepreneurs seeking to capitalize on emerging opportunities. **Ghosh and Das (2021)** explore entrepreneurial opportunities and challenges in elder care services, highlighting the dynamic nature of this industry. **Reddy and Ramya (2020)** delve into the growth trajectory of elder care services in India, offering insights into the market dynamics and entrepreneurial prospects. These studies contribute to our understanding of the entrepreneurial landscape in the elder care sector and the potential for innovation and growth.

Financial Management and Sustainability

Financial management plays a critical role in ensuring the sustainability of age care homes. **Sharma and Khan (2019)** examine financial management practices in age care homes, emphasizing the importance of sound financial strategies for long-term viability. **Mukherjee and Ghosh (2019)** analyze the economics of elder care, discussing emerging trends and challenges in India. Their findings highlight the need for innovative financial models and strategies to address the evolving needs of aging populations.

Managerial Strategies and Quality of Care

Effective managerial strategies are essential for enhancing the quality of care in age care homes. **Sinha (2018)** explores the role of managerial strategies in improving the quality of elder care services in India, emphasizing the importance of leadership and organizational culture. **Verma and Goel (2021)** provide insights into the implementation of managerial strategies to enhance the quality of care, drawing from case studies of selected age care homes. These studies underscore the significance of effective leadership and governance in ensuring resident satisfaction and well-being.

Digital Technology and Innovation

Digital technology has the potential to revolutionize elder care services, offering new avenues for innovation and efficiency. **Mahajan and Bansal (2021)** discuss the role of digital technology in enhancing elder care services in India, highlighting the benefits of telemedicine, remote monitoring, and assistive devices. Their findings suggest that technology-enabled solutions can improve access to care and enhance the overall quality of life for elderly individuals.

OBJECTIVES

- Assess awareness among stakeholders about the importance and availability of age care homes. Develop

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educational campaigns and advocacy strategies to enhance awareness and engagement.

- Examine and critique existing policies and regulations for age care homes. Identify areas for reform to ensure quality care and protect resident rights.
- Evaluate the adequacy of training programs for age care home professionals. Identify and implement improvements in curricula and professional development to ensure high-quality care.
- Analyze financial sustainability, including revenue, costs, and profitability. Recommend enhanced financial management practices, innovative funding models, and cost-effective care strategies to ensure long-term viability.
- Develop a framework for effective leadership and governance focusing on transparency, accountability, and stakeholder engagement. Analyze and align service diversification strategies with market needs and organizational goals to enhance service offerings.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction: The analytical approaches used to achieve the research objectives in this study employs a combination of archival and observational data analysis to explore the evolution of age care homes and their implications on management practices and financial reforms.

Research Design: This research adopts a **qualitative approach,** leveraging **archival records and observational data** to provide a comprehensive understanding of the historical development, current trends, and future prospects of age care homes.

Data Collection

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the conditions and challenges faced by age care homes, an observational method was employed during data collection. This involved visiting multiple age care homes and engaging directly with the individuals in charge of these facilities. Observations were meticulously recorded regarding the physical infrastructure, staff interactions, and overall environment within these homes. Additionally, informal interviews with the staff and residents were conducted to gather insights into their experiences, levels of satisfaction, and perceived challenges.

Observational Method

The observational method allowed for a detailed, first-hand assessment of the physical conditions and operational dynamics of the age care homes. Key aspects such as room ventilation, senior-friendly facilities, and overcrowding were noted. Specific attention was paid to the presence of necessary amenities like wide doors and handrails, which are essential for the mobility and safety of elderly residents. The method also enabled the identification of gaps in government policies and the impact of financial constraints on the quality of infrastructure.

Interviews and Informal Conversations

Informal conversations with the staff provided valuable insights into their training levels, experience, and the adequacy of staff-to-resident ratios. These discussions highlighted the lack of formal training programs and the need for professional development opportunities. Resident feedback was collected to understand their satisfaction levels and areas requiring improvement. These interactions were crucial in painting a holistic picture of the operational challenges and opportunities within these homes.

Data Analysis

The collected data were systematically analyzed to identify recurring themes, patterns, and trends. This analysis focused on infrastructure adequacy, staff training needs, financial sustainability, and resident satisfaction. The findings underscore the need for clear government policies, enhanced funding models, and improved training programs to elevate the standards of care and ensure the sustainability of age care homes.

FINDINGS

- Age care homes operate with undertrained staff and lack specialized roles, due to historical underinvestment in staff training and professional development.
- Many institutions suffer from inefficiencies and inconsistent care quality due to the absence of a structured organizational framework, lacking defined roles, responsibilities, and standardized policies.
- Most age care homes prioritize compassion over professional management and strategic planning, often neglecting principles essential for sustainable operations.
- Low pay discourages qualified personnel from joining and staying in the sector, leading to high turnover, staffing shortages, and limited investment in training and professional development.
- The elder care sector struggles with a lack of investor interest due to limited foresight on growth potential and profitability, resulting in insufficient strategic investment and innovative funding for long-term sustainability and improved service delivery.

SUGGESTIONS

- Implement comprehensive training programs for staff in age care homes, focusing on elder care techniques, scientific knowledge, psychological education, and communication skills. Investing in ongoing professional development can improve the quality of care provided to residents. Visits to other age care homes to enhance better perspective.
- Establish clear organizational frameworks, defined roles, and responsibilities within age care homes to improve operational efficiency and effectiveness. Implementing standardized policies and protocols can ensure consistency and accountability in care delivery across different institutions.
- Introduce specialized roles such as geriatric nurses, social workers,financial advisers, legal advisers, psychologists and administrators with expertise in elder care to address the complex needs of aging residents. Building a multidisciplinary team can enhance the quality of care and support provided.

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- Shift focus from compassionate-driven operations to professional management principles, emphasizing strong managerial skills and strategic planning. This transition can lead to more efficient resource allocation and improved overall outcomes for residents.
- Increase the pay scale for staff in age care homes to attract and retain qualified personnel. Offering competitive compensation packages can incentivize staff to invest in their professional development and contribute to the long-term sustainability of the sector by collaboarting with the governement or non profit entities and raise funds and sponsorships.
- Raise awareness among investors about the potential growth and profitability of the elder care sector. Highlight the long-term demand for elder care services and opportunities for strategic investment in age care homes.
- Develop targeted recruitment and retention strategies to address the shortage of human resources in urban areas. Offering incentives such as housing allowances, transportation support, and career advancement opportunities can attract skilled professionals to work in age care facilities and spread awareness on chnaging family dynamics and its impact specially in an urban set up.
- Encourage age care homes to adopt best practices from successful models globally. This could involve knowledge sharing, specialised care, benchmarking, and collaboration with experienced professionals and organizations in the field of elder care.
- Advocate for regulatory reforms that promote quality standards, transparency, and accountability within the elder care sector. Implementing regulations that ensure adherence to best practices can safeguard the rights and well-being of elderly residents. Encourage maintaining periodic records and reports, paying of taxes and maintaining a clear tax record.
- Foster community engagement and support for age care homes through educational campaigns, volunteer programs, and partnerships with local organizations. Building strong ties with the community can enhance the social integration and quality of life of residents.

CONCLUSION

The evolution of aged care homes has brought to light significant disparities in the quality and management of elder care services, particularly in the Indian context. This research identifies several critical gaps: a lack of trained staff, poor management structures, absence of specialization, and inadequate investment due to a lack of foresight. These issues are compounded by low pay scales, insufficient scientific and psychological education, poor communication skills, a shortage of human resources in urban areas, and the lack of clear hierarchies and strict policies. Addressing these challenges demands a multi-faceted approach. Policymakers and stakeholders must prioritize comprehensive training programs for staff to ensure they are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge. Implementing structured management practices and recognizing the financial potential of the elder care sector is crucial. Enhancing awareness and education about the complexities of elder care, along with strategic investments, can significantly improve the quality of care provided to the elderly. By adopting these measures, a more sustainable and effective elder care system can be established to meet the growing needs of an aging population. Future research should unequivocally focus on developing innovative models of care that integrate best practices from around the world, tailored to the specific cultural and socioeconomic contexts of India. Additionally, there should be an extensive emphasis on policy reforms and investment strategies that support the long-term sustainability of aged care homes, ensuring that they are adequately funded and managed.

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