



Woman in Development and Politics

Elderly Women and the Experience of Social Exclusion (Case Study: Women Living in Nursing Houses of Khorramabad City)

Fatemeh Bazgir¹  | Jamal Mohammadi² 

1. MA of Sociology, Department of Sociology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Kurdistan, Sanandaj, Iran. E-mail: f.bazgir66@yahoo.com
2. Corresponding Author, Associate professor of sociology, Department of Sociology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Kurdistan, Sanandaj, Iran. E-mail: m.jamal8@gmail.com

Article Info

Article type:

Research Article

Article history:

Received: 31 January 2023

Received in revised form: 9

April 2023

Accepted: 2 May 2023

Published online: 22 December 2023

Keywords:

Elderly Women, Extreme Fatalism, Generational Gap, Gradual Death, Loneliness, Social Exclusion.

ABSTRACT

Introduction

Regarding social exclusion, this qualitative study seeks to examine the lived experiences of elderly women residing in nursing homes in the city of Khorramabad. Social exclusion implies a process by which a group of people is denied access to various opportunities, capitals and resources normally available to other social groups. These resources are often of fundamental importance to social integration and observance of human rights within that excluded group. This particular deprived group, in this study, is elderly women. Generally, older persons are considered a vulnerable group, mainly because they risk a reduction in participation in various domains of life through the loss of paid work, a decrease in income and an increase in health problems. So, any investigation into the way in which elderly women encounter social exclusion can illuminate not only the gaps and setbacks within this generational cohort's daily lives, but also contribute to the comprehension of additional phenomena including discrimination and deprivation, inefficiency, redundancy, generational disparities and family transformation.

Methodology

In order to accomplish this study, we have conducted an in-depth analysis of the causal conditions, intervening conditions, and consequences of social exclusion as experienced by elderly women using grounded theory. Grounded theory, as a general research methodology, is a way of thinking about, conceptualizing and analyzing qualitative and constructed data. It is used in studies of diverse populations from areas like remarriage after divorce and professional socialization. In this research, the participants were intentionally selected from the residents of Haj Seddique and Farzanegan nursing homes in the metropolis of Khorramabad. The data were gathered via in-depth semi-structured interviews.

Results

Aging is a social construct which could be explained only through a critical analyzing of the most fundamental social values and attitudes that form the basis of power relations of society. The rise of a social institution like nursing home in modern era is deeply related with the genesis of a new social formation in which family, state and society are interrelated in an unprecedented way. The current research was carried out focusing this issue that under what circumstances do families decide to take elderly women to nursing homes? And more importantly, how do elderly women experience social exclusion in nursing homes? And what consequences and effects does this experience have on the personality and life of the elderly in their last years of life? The findings show that social exclusions are caused by the following factors: women's lack of economic independence, which manifests itself in various ways including inability to work and insufficient financial support; a decline in traditional family solidarity, which is evident in the erosion of maternal authority, the widening generational divide, and the rise of individualism (these three factors are intricately interconnected); and finally, the transformation of lifestyles which is reflected in transformation of home's equipment, semantic change of family labour and the domination of gender bias. These three causal conditions are dialectically interrelated. It means that

elderly women's economic inability is partially due to transformation of family form which, in turn, causes a kind of generational gap. So, what follows is that the elderly would be excluded more and more. However, it is crucial to note that these causal conditions are triggered by certain background conditions that can be classified as dis-embedding of the life-world. This implies that elderly women are confronted with a generational divide, a gradual decline of traditional life-world, and a bitter sense of being rootless. Dis-embedding of the life-world is a mechanism by which elderly women feel that they don't live a desired and valued life anymore; they feel their lives are devoid of any useful content and meaning. If embeddedness is a situation of seeing oneself as part of the social context and a member of the group, dis-embeddedness is exactly the opposite. This condition gives rise to certain psychological states, including profound pessimism and a profound sense of isolation. The initial factor is marked by a lack of confidence in society and an awareness of one's own susceptibility to harm. The subsequent element manifests as a yearning for a bygone era and a sense of being overlooked. The confluence of these two causal and background conditions significantly impacts the life and personality of elderly women, leading to a sense of detachment from the material world and a precipitous descent into incremental mortality. They therefore symbolize symptoms including aggression or silence/ aggressiveness, a sense of isolation, and self-illness. Alternatively, they hold a firm conviction in extreme fatalism and personal encounters with death. Living in nursing homes in the semi-traditional and semi-modern city of Khorramabad entails, in a nutshell, seclusion from the physical world and acceptance of a progressive demise. Overwhelmingly, the elderly is regarded as a vulnerable demographic due to the risks they face, which include diminished participation in diverse spheres of life due to unemployment, income reduction, and heightened health complications.

Conclusion

Generally, it can be concluded that, for elderly women, social exclusion is experienced as denying control of financial resources; denying access to health opportunities, education and shelters and the rights to participate in social, economic, political and cultural spheres and also denial of basic human rights and self-respect. In other words, elderly women face exclusion in all spheres of life including, civil, political, economic, educational and social domains. The present research was initially aimed at gaining insights into social exclusion by focusing on the experiences of the subjects themselves, and it is argued that this will strengthen existing knowledge about the specific exclusion experience of the elderly. It has been attempted those different aspects of social exclusion and the major factors or indicators of social exclusion in the elderly be explored. It is concluded that elderly women are disadvantages of their rights to participate in the process of social progress like health, education, living standards, social and political activities. For them, social exclusion occurs at different levels, including macro forces and micro circumstances. So, social exclusion in old age is a multidimensional phenomenon that differs in shape and degree over the course of older adult life that influencing the older people's well-being and equity and cohesion of ageing citizens.

Cite this article: Bazgir, F., & Mohammadi, J. (2023). Elderly Women and the Experience of Social Exclusion (Case Study: Women Living in Nursing Houses of Khorramabad City). *Women in Development and Politics*, 21(4), 999-1027.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22059/jwdp.2023.354608.1008309>



© The Author(s).

Publisher: The University of Tehran Press.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22059/jwdp.2023.354608.1008309>
