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Department of Architecture and Planning

Masters of Urban Planning

Semester II

SP 2023

***Aging in Place Housing and Community in the Indian
Context:***

Current Status, Challenges, and Future Directions

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*Title: Aging in Place Housing and Community in the Indian Context:
Current Status, Challenges, and Future Directions*

Abstract: Ageing in place, or older adults' ability to live independently in their own homes and communities as they age, is a growing phenomenon around the world, including in India. With a rapidly ageing population, India faces significant challenges in meeting older adults' housing and community needs. The purpose of this paper is to provide a thorough overview of the current state, challenges, and future directions of ageing in place, housing, and community in the Indian context. The paper begins by discussing India's ageing demographic trends and the implications for housing and community development. It then looks at the current state of housing and community arrangements for older adults in India, including traditional family-based options and institutional care options.

Key words: ageing in place, housing, community, India, challenges, policy recommendations.

1. Introduction:

Ageing in place is a global phenomenon that refers to older adults' ability to age independently in their own homes and communities while still having access to necessary support and services. Many older adults prefer it because it allows them to maintain their autonomy, social connections, and quality of life in familiar surroundings. Ageing in place has many advantages, including improved physical and mental health outcomes, increased social engagement, and lower healthcare costs. However, there are significant challenges to ageing in place, such as the need for accessible and affordable housing, adequate social support systems, and appropriate community infrastructure. India, like many other countries, is experiencing rapid population ageing. 1. According to the United Nations, India will have over 340 million people aged 60 and older by 2050, making it one of the world's largest ageing populations (United Nations, 2019). This demographic shift has significant implications for housing and community

development in India, because older adults have specific needs and requirements that must be met to ensure their well-being and quality of life. We will present an overview of the current state, challenges, and future directions of ageing in place, housing, and community in the Indian context in this paper.

2. Trends in Demographics India:

These are undergoing a rapid demographic transition, with a significant increase in the proportion of older adults in its population. This demographic shift is primarily the result of lower fertility rates, increased life expectancy, and better healthcare facilities. The proportion of older adults (aged 60 and above) in the total population has increased from 5.6% in 1961 to 8.6% in 2011 (Census of India, 2011). In addition, the number of older adults in India is expected to triple by 2050, from 104 million in 2011 to 340 million (United Nations, 2019). This demographic trend has a number of implications for Indian housing and community development. As the population ages, there will be a greater demand for housing tailored for older persons, such as accessible and inexpensive homes that satisfy the physical, social, and emotional needs of older citizens. There will also be a need for supportive community environments that provide opportunity for social participation, access to healthcare and social services, and safe and walkable neighbourhoods. The changing demographic environment necessitates a re-evaluation of existing social support services and infrastructure in order for older individuals to age in place with dignity and independence. Housing and community arrangements for elderly individuals in India are diverse and complex, reflecting the country's cultural and social variety. Traditional family-based arrangements, in which older folks live with their adult children and grandkids, have long been a popular kind of accommodation for the elderly in India. In this situation, older persons frequently rely on their relatives for social support, caregiving, and financial support. This style of intergenerational living is profoundly ingrained in Indian culture, which values elder reverence and filial devotion. Changing social and economic forces in India, however, have resulted in a shift in family forms and living arrangements. Nuclear families are becoming more widespread, and younger generations are

flocking to cities in quest of better prospects, leaving elderly folks behind in rural areas or in metropolitan households with minimal social support. As a result, older persons may experience concerns such as loneliness, social isolation, and insufficient caring assistance.

3. Obstacles and Challenges to Ageing in Place in India:

Despite the traditional significance of family-based arrangements and the rise of old-age homes in India, there are various problems and barriers to ageing in place. These difficulties are classified as financial limits, a lack of suitable housing options, insufficient social support networks, and insufficient infrastructure.

4. Financial constraints:

One of the most significant challenges that older adults in India face is related to finance. Many older adults have little or no income and rely on pensions, savings, or child support to meet their financial needs. However, not all older adults have adequate financial resources, and poverty among older adults is a major issue in India. The inability to afford suitable housing or access necessary services due to a lack of financial independence can have an impact on their ability to age in place.

In India, the availability of suitable housing options for older adults is also a challenge. The majority of India's housing stock is not designed to meet the needs of older adults, such as accessibility features, safety measures, and social amenities. Physical barriers in the home, such as stairs, narrow doorways, and a lack of handrails, can pose risks for falls and limit mobility in older adults. Furthermore, housing options for older adults, such as senior living communities or retirement communities, are limited and often prohibitively expensive, making them inaccessible to many older adults. Inadequate social support systems also make ageing in place difficult in India. For older adults to maintain their well-being and independence, social support, including emotional, social, and caregiving support, is critical. However, many older adults in India, particularly those who live alone or have limited social connections, may lack access to social support networks. Traditional family-based arrangements may not always provide adequate social support because younger generations may be preoccupied

with their own lives or may not live close to older adults. This can result in issues like social isolation, loneliness, and insufficient caregiving support, all of which have an impact on older adults' ability to age in place successfully.

Another barrier to ageing in place in India is inadequate infrastructure. Accessible public transportation, pedestrian-friendly streets, and age-friendly public areas are critical for older individuals to maintain mobility, access services, and participate in their communities. However, many Indian cities and towns lack such infrastructure, which might hinder older individuals' capacity to move around securely and freely, hurting their ability to age in place.

Furthermore, there are cultural and psychological impediments to ageing in India. Traditional norms and beliefs that emphasise filial piety and familial support may deter older individuals from seeking alternative housing or formal care services. There may be a stigma attached to living in nursing homes or relying on outside assistance, prompting older persons to prefer family-based arrangements even if they are not beneficial to their well-being.

Future Trends in Ageing in Place in India to ensure that older individuals can successfully age in place in the Indian environment, multifaceted interventions that address the problems and constraints outlined above are required. Here are some probable future directions in India for promoting ageing in place:

Housing alternatives that are both affordable and accessible: There is an urgent need in India to increase the availability of affordable and accessible housing options for the elderly. This could include the creation of age-friendly housing complexes or the renovation of existing houses to make them more accessible and safe for older people. Government subsidies or incentives can be provided to encourage the development of age-friendly housing alternatives, and public-private partnerships can be formed to make such housing more cheap and accessible.

Infrastructure designed for the elderly: The creation of age-friendly infrastructure, such as accessible public transportation, pedestrian-friendly streets, and age-friendly public areas, is critical to allowing older individuals to move around securely and

independently. City planners and legislators must prioritise age-friendly urban planning.

5. Improving social support systems:

In India, there is a need to improve social support systems for older individuals. This could include establishing community-based support networks, offering carer training and assistance, and encouraging intergenerational interactions among older persons in order to develop social connections and prevent social isolation. Furthermore, technological interventions such as telehealth and telecare can be used to give remote assistance and services to older persons, particularly those who live alone or have limited social ties.

6. Raising awareness and changing cultural attitudes:

There is a need to raise knowledge about the value of ageing in place, as well as challenge cultural attitudes that discourage older persons from seeking alternative housing or formal care services. Education and awareness campaigns can be carried out to promote good attitudes towards ageing, remove myths and misconceptions about old-age homes or formal care services, and urge families to support the housing and care preferences of older individuals.

7. Policy and regulatory interventions:

There is a need for policy and regulatory interventions in India to support ageing in place. This could include the creation of national or local policies that promote age-friendly housing, urban planning, and social support systems. Furthermore, regulations can be put in place to ensure that housing and community arrangements for older adults meet the necessary accessibility, safety, and quality standards.

Conclusion ageing in place is a critical component of meeting the needs and well-being of India's older adults. As the country's demographics change rapidly, it is critical to identify the challenges and barriers to ageing in place and work to create enabling environments that support the ageing population. This paper discussed the current state of housing and community arrangements for older adults in India, as well as the challenges

and barriers to ageing in place that older adults face, such as insufficient housing options, a lack of age-friendly infrastructure, social isolation, and cultural attitudes. There are, however, promising future directions that can help promote ageing in place in India, such as affordable and accessible housing options, age-friendly infrastructure, strengthened social support systems, raising awareness, and changing cultural attitudes, policy and regulatory interventions.

To ensure successful ageing in place in India, a holistic and integrated approach that addresses the multifaceted needs of older adults is required. This includes not only physical infrastructure but also social, psychological, and cultural aspects of ageing. Collaboration among various stakeholders, such as government agencies, non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations, academia, and older adults themselves, is essential for creating supportive environments that allow older adults to age in place with dignity and autonomy.

8. Conclusion:

In short, ageing in place is a huge global phenomenon with considerable consequences for housing and community development, particularly in fast-ageing cultures like India. Because of India's ageing population, there is a higher demand for accessible and cheap housing, enough social support systems, and appropriate community infrastructure for older people.

Traditional family-based systems for senior care have been popular in India, but shifting social and economic circumstances have necessitated the need for new housing and communal arrangements. Unfortunately, budgetary restrictions, a lack of acceptable housing options, limited social support networks, and insufficient infrastructure all offer substantial barriers to Indians ageing in place. To overcome these obstacles and ensure that older individuals can age with dignity and independence, policy interventions addressing issues such as affordable and accessible housing, social support networks, and infrastructure are required. Increased pension benefits, affordable housing options, and community-based health and social services are examples of policy solutions. In conclusion, ageing in place is a complicated issue that necessitates multifaceted policy responses

in order to establish a conducive environment for older people to age in place.

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