

Abstract

The increase in the population of senior citizens in India along the change in the traditional family structure is subsequently shifting the responsibility of care-giving for the Indian elderly upon the government. Extensive studies in the domain of Quality of Life (QoL) has established its decline in old age. The restrictions imposed by the weakening physical capacities of the elderly limit a majority of their activities up to the periphery of their immediate residential surroundings or neighborhoods. Thus, the role of aging-in-place and the built environment features of the neighbourhood in contributing to the QoL of elderly needs to be researched in the Indian context. The present research links perceived QoL of the Indian elderly with the neighborhood infrastructure and attributes, through their daily activities.

The perception of QoL and the features people associate with age friendliness have also been observed to vary according to their socio-demographic characteristics and the locale in which they reside. This research explores if socio-demographic characteristics of the Indian elderly have any impact upon the prioritization of the factors influencing perceived QoL, and prioritization in the need for neighborhood infrastructure and attributes.

This study adopts both qualitative and quantitative approaches for achieving the objectives. In the first stage, the study identifies a list of QoL factors, and their associated activities, neighborhood infrastructure and attributes, from extensive literature study and focus group discussions with elderly participants residing in Kolkata, India. The responses from the focus group discussions were analyzed using content analysis technique. The prioritization of QoL factors and neighborhood features were derived from the application of quantitative analysis techniques on the Likert scale responses acquired from surveys conducted with elderly participants of Kolkata, India.

The present research helps in compiling an extensive list of QoL factors into a comprehensive list, which can be used for development of a QoL index, specific for Indian elderly. The research provides an overall methodology for identifying neighborhood based infrastructure catering to the overall perceived QoL of Indian elderly. The findings can be used for the development of neighborhood design guidelines catering to the overall well-being of the Indian elderly.