

# Positive Ageing with Special Focus on Women: Concerns and Encounters

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**Abstract-** Positive ageing is a part of life that gamut that comprises of many aspects including physical environment, personal safety, physical and mental health, individuality, community attitudes, self-fulfillment.

In order for women to age positively we should

1. It is important to recognize wide range of capacities among aged
2. It is important to understand the needs of older women.
3. Valuing the decisions and regime choices of older women.
4. Safeguarding the interest of defenseless older people.

When the human body reaches middle age, a number of problems and conditions that are the result of advancing years begin. These include wrinkling of the skin, varicose veins, menopause and the body's decreased ability to deal with nicotine, caffeine, alcohol, and excess calories.

A number of programs and resources have to be introduced to support positive ageing like

- Women workforce retaining project
- Special projects involving older as well as young generation.
- Planning ahead kit to encourage people in planning their financial, health and lifestyle decisions
- Information centers of older women to disseminate information.
- Protocols to check older women abuse.

## I. POSITIVE AGEING WITH SPECIAL FOCUS ON WOMEN: CONCERNS AND ENCOUNTERS

Positive ageing is closely aligned with the ability to "age in place"; that is, to be able to make choices in later life about where to live, and receive the support needed to do so. For older people to maintain their independence and age in place successfully, it is important that they have adequate and affordable housing that meets their needs. Older people do not require support services to live at home, but people aged 80 and over are more likely to require assistance. Concerns about safety and security are also greatest among older people who are vulnerable because of frailty, lack of resources, or isolation.

It is in everyone's interest that older people are encouraged and supported to remain self-reliant, and that they continue to participate and contribute to the well-being of themselves, their families. Factors influencing their ability to access services and participate in their community include not only health status and income but also access to and availability of transport.

While six major areas of aging were addressed, the most pressing and significant of them were healthcare services and the health status of the aging population. As is becoming increasingly clear, healthcare is becoming the "third rail" of politics and is looming as the single most critical issue in aging.

Encapsulating its core values:

- Fostering a positive view of ageing;
- Promoting attitudes which respect and value older people;
- Recognizing and supporting older people's participation and contribution;
- Valuing self-reliance, independence, individual responsibility;
- Acknowledging diversity among the older population.

The 'positive ageing discourse' challenges assumptions about older age as a period of inevitable decline and focuses on the modifiable effects of lifestyle, attitude, skills and technologies. The approach aligns with the rejection of the 'disengagement' theory of ageing, which suggests that adjustment to old age is best achieved through a mutual withdrawal between the individual and society. Instead, the strategies support the alternative 'activity' theory of ageing. This emphasizes the need to remain actively engaged in society in order to adapt successfully to older age. Underlying the strategies' positive view of ageing are concepts of 'healthy', 'successful', 'positive', 'active' and 'productive ageing', which have emerged in recent decades.

In the ultimate analysis, improving health of older women is not just a medical concern. It is also a truism that unless one improves the status of women in a society, wholesome development of women would be impossible. Health is not isolated from social status, power and prestige person enjoys and the privileges a role bestows on an individual. If women suffer from chronic ill health and disability, it is a reflection of their lower status in society. Hence, not only should our measures have a life cycle perspective; they should also have a gender perspective. An egalitarian society will provide an aging woman better health information, improved access to health care and a chance to age with grace die with dignity.

A critical view of strategies on ageing now and in the future

All strategies promote active and productive ageing and support the concept of positive ageing, with an emphasis on improving wellbeing and promoting positive attitudes to ageing. The strategies promote the value of older people's contributions and seek increased participation, promoting the benefits for both individuals and society. The healthy/active/positive ageing discourse promoted in all Positive Ageing strategies has been criticized for failing to acknowledge the range of realities of later

life. By placing a high value on independence and activity, the strategies tend to underplay the experience of people who suffer frailty and dependence in later life. Critics argue that the positive ageing discourse fails to acknowledge the significance of later life, thereby allowing society to avoid thinking about and creating a respected place for the oldest in society. Furthermore, the positive ageing discourse portrays older people as able to counteract the effects of ageing through personal effort, thus identifying individuals as being responsible for their fate.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The first formal studies of ageing appear to be those of Muhammad ibn Yusuf al-Harawi (1582) in his book "Ainul Hayat", published by Ibn Sina Academy of Medieval Medicine and Sciences.

There is no greater certainty in life, than death. The biological process of ageing is steady and unidirectional.

Ageing is the accumulation of changes in an organism or object over time. Ageing in humans refers to a multidimensional process of physical, psychological, and social change. Some dimensions of ageing grow and expand over time, while others decline. Reaction time, for example, may slow with age, while knowledge of world events and wisdom may expand. Research shows that even late in life, potential exists for physical, mental, and social growth and development. Ageing is an important part of all human societies reflecting the biological changes that occur, but also reflecting cultural and societal conventions. Roughly 100,000 people worldwide die each day of age-related causes.

Age is measured chronologically, and a person's birthday is often an important event. However the term "ageing" is somewhat ambiguous. Distinctions may be made between "universal ageing" (age changes that all people share) and "probabilistic ageing" (age changes that may happen to some, but not all people as they grow older including diseases such as type two diabetes). Chronological ageing may also be distinguished from "social ageing" (cultural age-expectations of how people should act as they grow older) and "biological ageing" (an organism's physical state as it ages). There is also a distinction between "proximal ageing" (age-based effects that come about because of factors in the recent past) and "distal ageing" (age-based differences that can be traced back to a cause early in person's life, such as childhood).

Differences are sometimes made between populations of elderly people. Divisions are sometimes made between the young old (65–74), the middle old (75–84) and the oldest old (85+). However, problematic in this is that chronological age does not correlate perfectly with functional age, i.e. two people may be of the same age, but differ in their mental and physical capacities. Each nation, government and non-government organization has different ways of classifying age.

Population ageing is the increase in the number and proportion of older people in society. Population ageing has three possible causes: migration, longer life expectancy (decreased death rate), and decreased birth rate. Ageing has a significant impact on society. Young people tend to commit most crimes; they are more likely to push for political and social change, to develop and adopt new technologies, and to need education. Older people have different requirements from society and government as opposed to young people, and frequently differing values as well. Older people are also far more likely to vote, and in many countries the young are forbidden from voting. Thus, the aged have comparatively more political influence.

## III. METHODOLOGY

### Research Site

In 2012 April, the research positive ageing and its impact had begun. The objective of the research is to study to study the need and impact of positive ageing on older people especially women. The sample size selected for the study was 50 respondents of the age group of 55 and above. The study was conducted for six weeks between June and July 2012.

### Data Collection and Analyses

The data was collected through two sources – Primary and secondary.

The primary data was collected from aged people above the age group of 55 by structured questionnaire method specifically designed for the purpose of study after pretesting. A 4-point (1 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Strongly Disagree) Likert's Scale format designed is used to indicate subject's responses to the questionnaire.

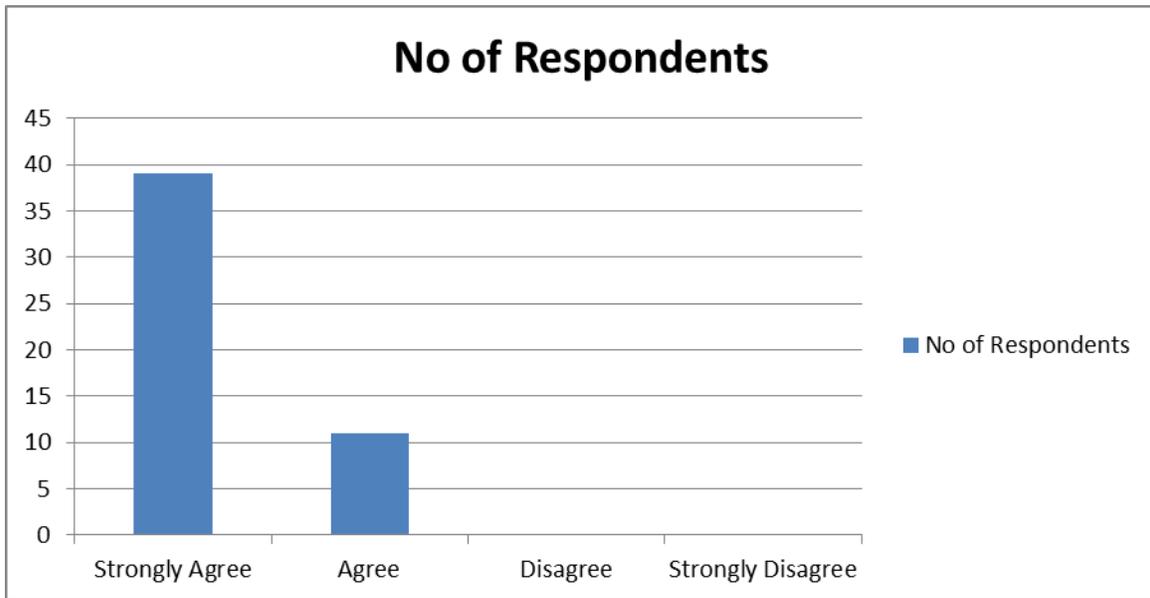
Secondary data collection was from previous research reports, magazines, articles, websites, journals and related books.

## IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

**Table 1**

*1. I have so much in life to be thankful for.*

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>39</i>	<i>78%</i>
<i>Agree</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>22%</i>
<i>Disagree</i>	<i>00</i>	<i>0%</i>
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>00</i>	<i>0%</i>
<i>Total Respondents</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>100%</i>

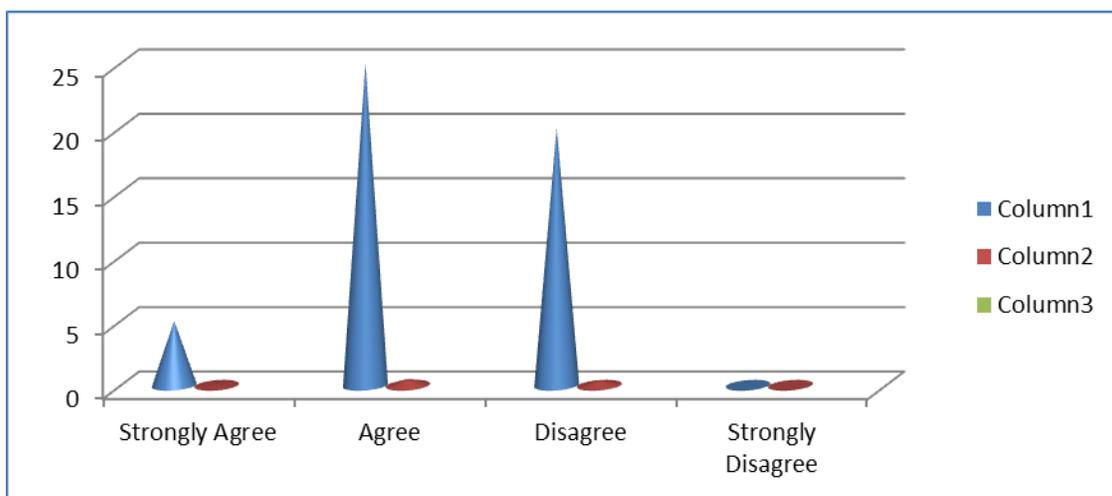


*Table 1 depicts that 78% of the respondents strongly agree and 22% of the respondents agree that they have much in life to be thankful for.*

**Table 2**

*2. Everybody in my family treats me with respect and care.*

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>05</i>	<i>10%</i>
<i>Agree</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>50%</i>
<i>Disagree</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>40%</i>
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>00</i>	<i>0%</i>
<i>Total Respondents</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>100%</i>

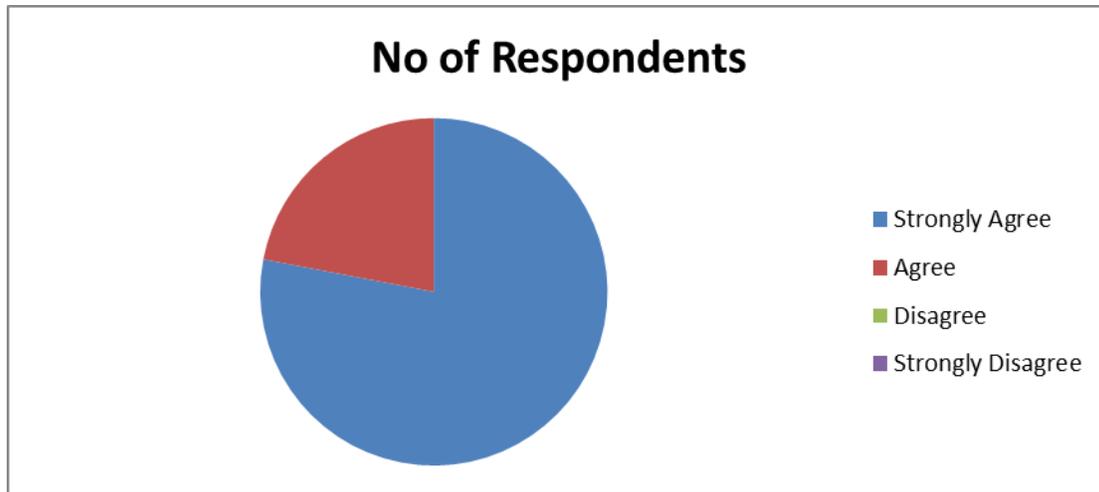


*Table 2 depicts that 50% of the respondents agree and 10% of the respondents strongly agree that everybody in the family treats me with care and respect.*

**Table 3**

**3. I energetically pursue my goals.**

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	39	78%
<i>Agree</i>	11	22%
<i>Disagree</i>	00	0%
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	00	0%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	50	100%

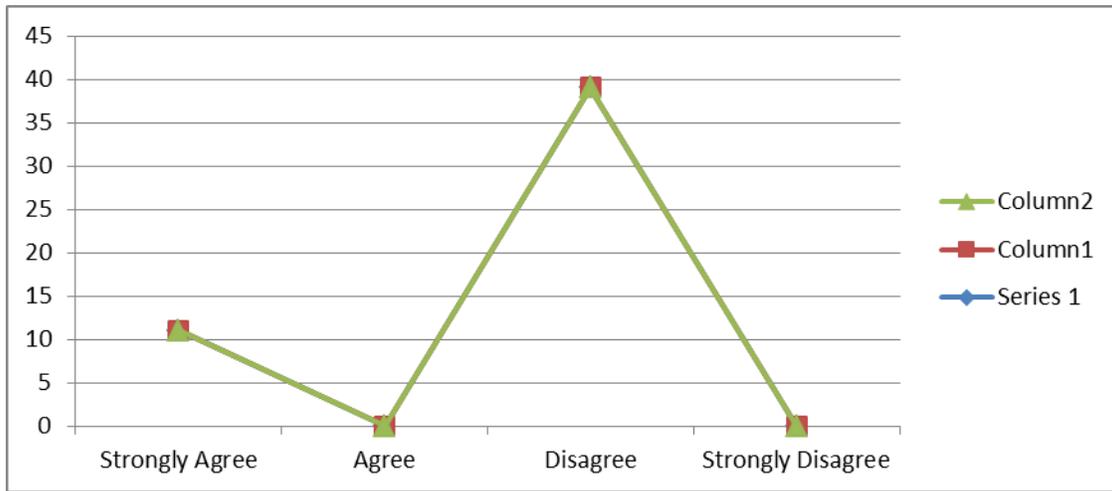


*Table 4 depicts that 78% of the respondents strongly agree and 22% of the respondents agree that they can energetically pursue their goals.*

**Table 4**

**4. I have never faced an incident where I was made to feel unimportant because I was a woman.**

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	11	22%
<i>Agree</i>	00	0%
<i>Disagree</i>	39	78%
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	00	0%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	50	100%

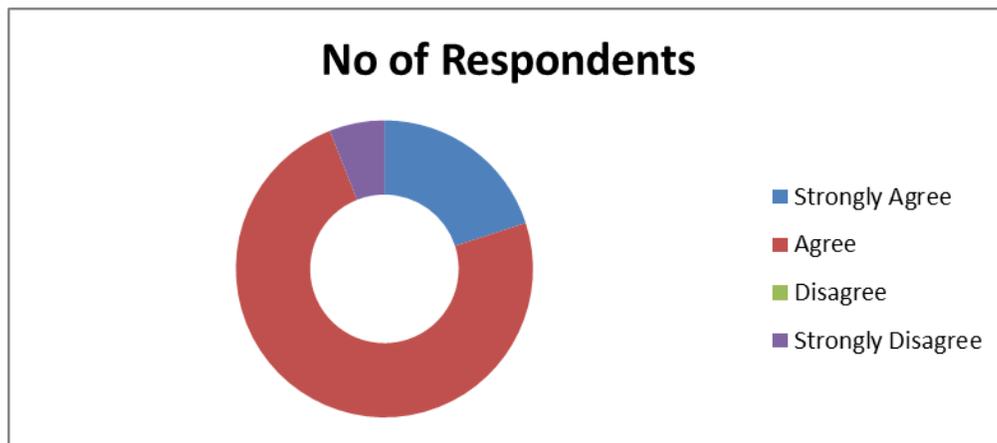


*Table 5 depicts that 22% of the respondents agree and 78% of the respondents disagree that there had been no incidences where they were made to feel unimportant because they are women.*

**Table 5**

*5. My past experiences have prepared me well for my future. (Tick one)*

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>20%</i>
<i>Agree</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>75%</i>
<i>Disagree</i>	<i>00</i>	<i>0%</i>
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>03</i>	<i>5%</i>
<i>Total Respondents</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>100%</i>

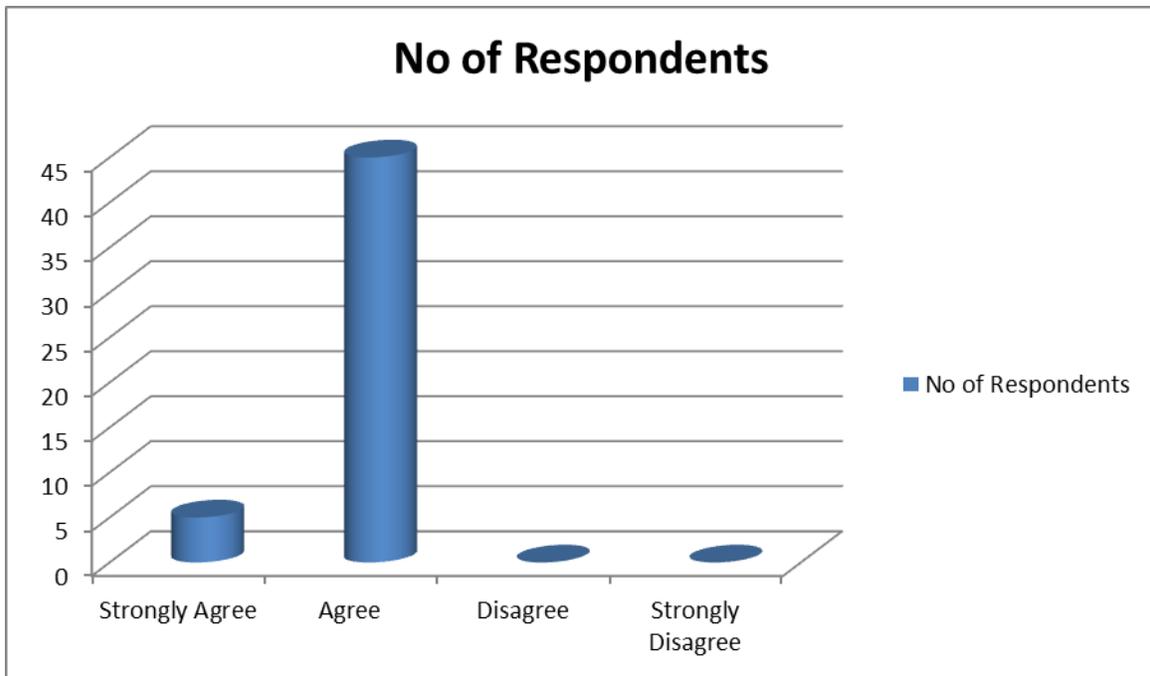


*Table 5 depicts that 20% of the respondents strongly agree and 75% of the respondents agree and 5% of them strongly disagree that their past experiences have prepared them well for their future.*

**Table 6**

**6. I have discovered a satisfying life purpose.**

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	05	10%
<i>Agree</i>	45	90%
<i>Disagree</i>	00	0%
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	00	0%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	50	100%

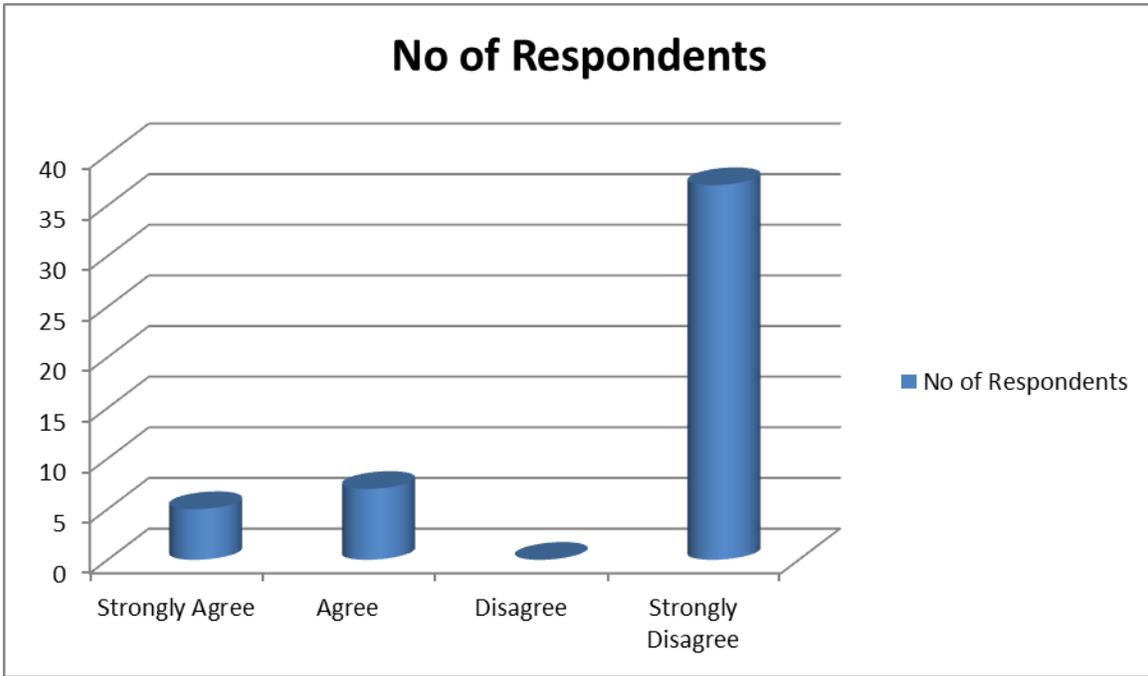


*Table 7 depicts that 10% of the respondents strongly agree and 90% of the respondents agree that they have discovered a satisfying life purpose.*

**Table 7**

**7. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.**

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	05	10%
<i>Agree</i>	07	15%
<i>Disagree</i>	00	0%
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	37	75%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	50	100%

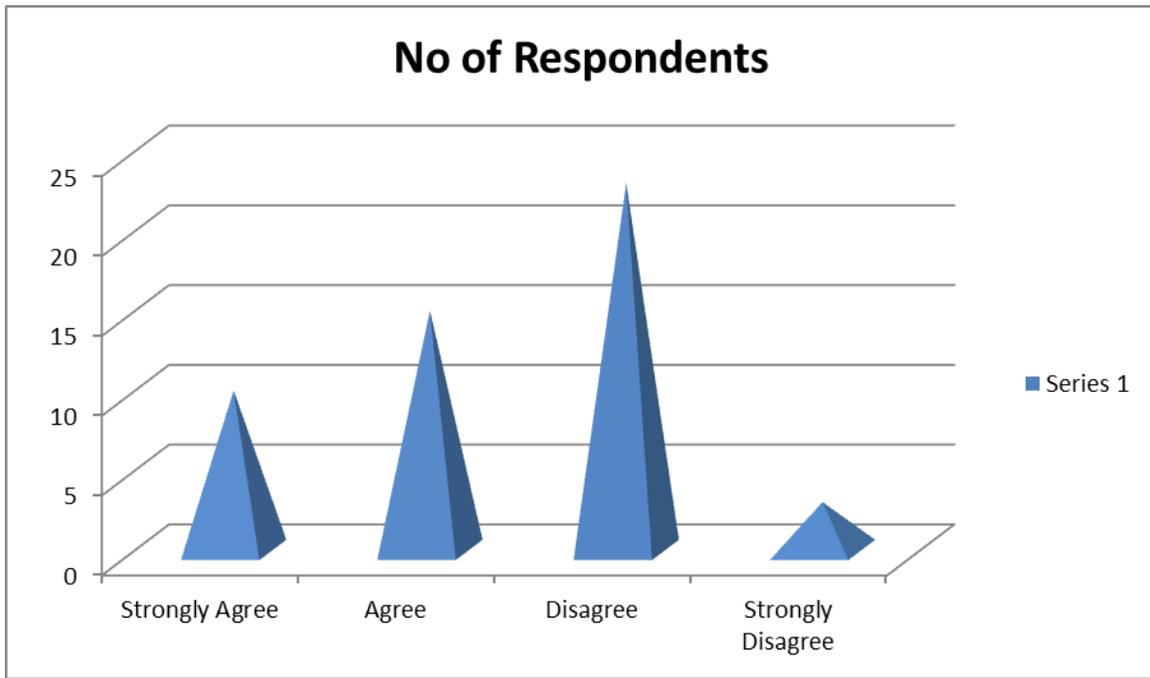


*Table 8 depicts that 10% of the respondents strongly agree, 15% of the respondents agree and 75% of them strongly disagree that if they could live their life over, they would change almost nothing.*

**Table 8**

**8. My family, especially the male members were very supportive.**

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>20%</i>
<i>Agree</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>30%</i>
<i>Disagree</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>46%</i>
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>03</i>	<i>5%</i>
<i>Total Respondents</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>100%</i>

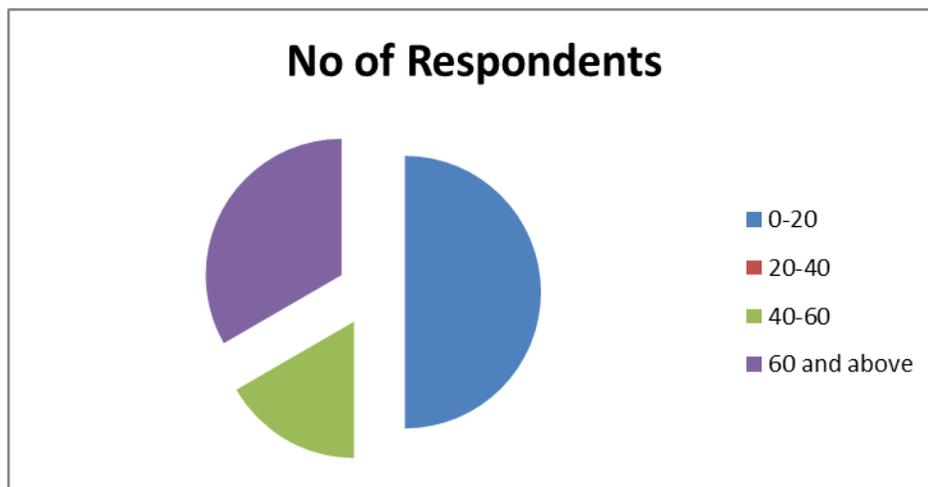


*Table 8 depicts that 20% of the respondents strongly agree, 30% of the respondents agree, 46% of the respondents disagree and 5% of them strongly disagree that their family, especially the male members were very supportive.*

**Table 9**

*9. If yes for Q8. please tick the age group of the male members who were supportive to you.*

0-20	15
20-40	00
40-60	05
60 and above	10
Total Respondents	25

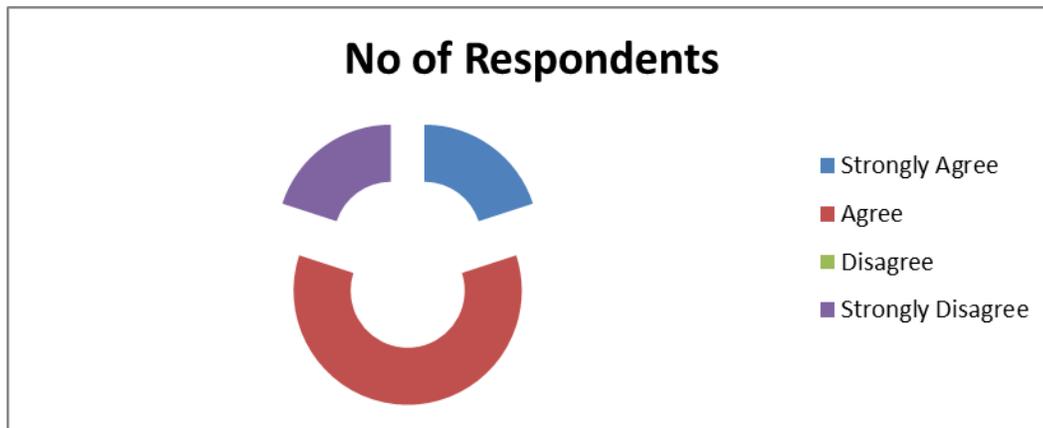


*Table 9 depicts that, most of the respondents feel that male members from the age group of 0-20 years and 60 and above are more supportive.*

**Table10**

**10. The conditions of my life are excellent.**

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	10	20%
<i>Agree</i>	30	60%
<i>Disagree</i>	00	0%
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	10	20%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	50	100%

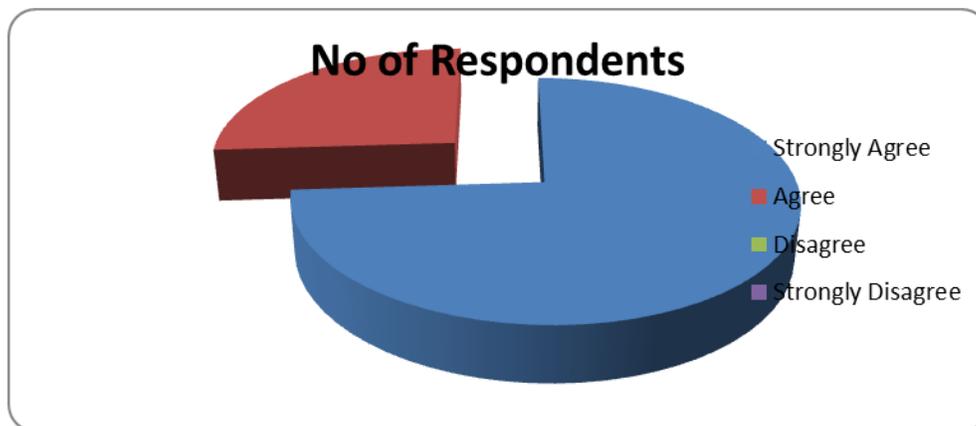


*Table 10 depicts that 20% of the respondents strongly agree, 60% of the respondents agree and 20% of them strongly disagree that the conditions of their life are excellent.*

**Table 11**

**11. I understand my life's meaning.**

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	37	75%
<i>Agree</i>	13	25%
<i>Disagree</i>	00	0%
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	00	0%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	50	100%



*Table 11 depicts that 75% of the respondents strongly agree, 25% of the respondents agree and that they understand their life's meaning.*

**Table 12**

**12. As I get older I find myself more able to appreciate the people, events and situations that have been part of my life history.**

Strongly Agree	37	75%
Agree	13	25%
Disagree	00	0%
Strongly Disagree	00	0%
Total Respondents	50	100%

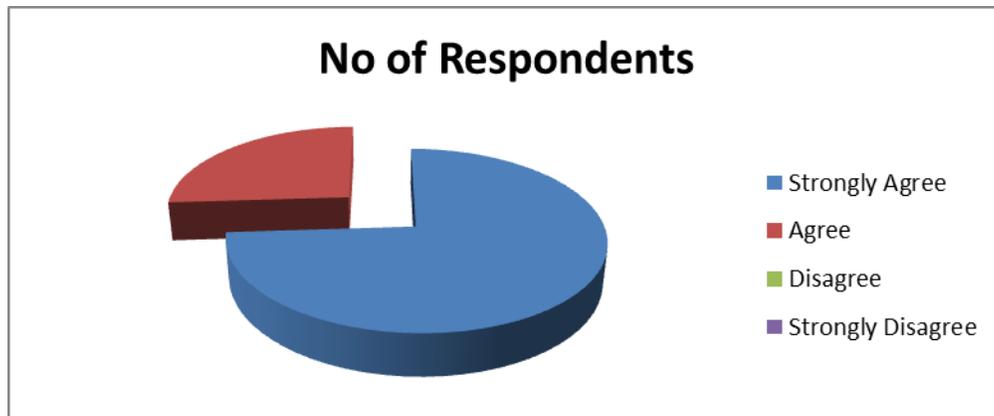


Table 12 depicts that 75% of the respondents strongly agree, 25% of the respondents agree and that as they get older they find themselves more able to appreciate the people, events and situations that have been part of their life history.

**Table 14**

**14. I have never felt at the mercy of my family member**

Strongly Agree	15	30%
Agree	15	30%
Disagree	20	40%
Strongly Disagree	00	0%
Total Respondents	50	100%

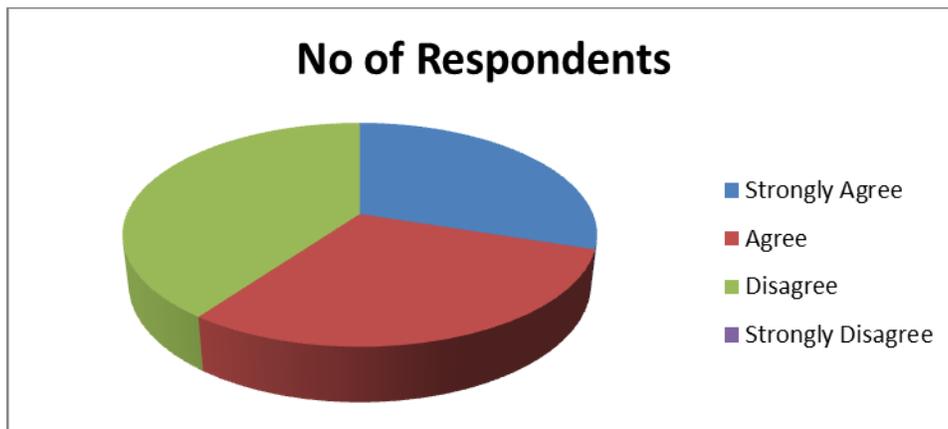
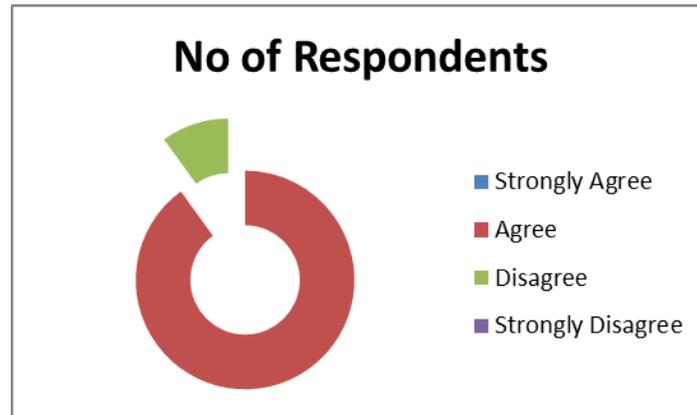


Table 14 depicts that 30% of the respondents strongly agree, 30% of the respondents agree and 40% of them disagree that they never felt at the mercy of their family members

**Table 15**

**15. I know what my unique contribution to the world might be.**

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	00	0%
<i>Agree</i>	45	90%
<i>Disagree</i>	05	10%
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	00	0%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	50	100%



**Table 15 depicts that 90% of the respondents agree, 15% of the respondents agree and 10 % of them disagree that they know about unique contribution that they have towards the world.**

**V. FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION**

**Findings**

Older people in our society are always looked upon as liability for the family as well as the society. However it is very important for the society to understand what they feel in order to help them age positively and also contribute to the society in better way.

- 1) Most of the respondents feel that they are thankful for most of the things they got in their life.
- 2) 50% of the respondents feel that they are treated with respect and care in the family however 40% of the respondents feel that they are taken for granted and family members do not show respect.
- 3) After the age of 55 as well respondents are enthusiastic and energetic enough to pursue goals.
- 4) Most of the respondents who are female feel that they felt unimportant in their family because they are a woman.
- 5) Most of the respondents think that they are satisfied with their life and feel that they are prepared for any situation in life.
- 6) Most women respondents feel that men in the age group of 0-20 and 60 and above are more supportive than other age groups.
- 7) Most of the respondents feel that they have led a good life.
- 8) Some of the respondents feel that they are at the mercy of their family to fulfill their basic needs.

**VI. SUGGESTIONS**

Recognizing and supporting older people’s participation and contribution

The ‘vision’ calls for opportunities for older people to participate and contribute ‘in the ways that they choose’. However, the goals link such opportunities to paid work (economic activity) or community contribution (volunteering), with the emphasis on the former. The economic tone of Positive Ageing continues, as older people are described as a ‘valuable resource’. However, full participation may be prevented by lack of access to resources and facilities (indicating a need to scrutinize policy) or by ageist attitudes (requiring a change in society). Limitations based on ill health or frailty is the main backlogs. The emphasis on continuing economic contribution in the form of paid work links to calls for ‘productive ageing’. It is developed much more explicitly in the UK and Australian documents, both of which devote whole chapters to increasing workforce participation in mid and later life. All Positive Ageing strategies discourage early retirement. Compared to the UK and Australia, India has few incentives to early retirement like the VRS (Voluntary Retirement Scheme) have been introduced. Accesses to training and educational opportunities are closely linked with efforts to prolong workforce opportunities. In contrast to the strategies of other countries, educational opportunities for older people do not figure prominently in India. Increasing opportunities for personal growth and community participation – the specified action is a somewhat vague call to ‘improve opportunities for education for all’. The many government statements advocate ‘sticks’ in the form of fiscal disincentives to retirement and reductions in pension benefits. More positive approaches include phased retirement and flexible

working conditions. Such initiatives are not highly prominent in any of the strategies, even though– Elimination of ageism and promotion of flexible work options. The action advocated relates to the implementation of human resource policies that support employment of older workers, but refers only to the public sector.

A number of programs and resources have to be introduced to support positive ageing like

- Women workforce retaining project
- Special projects involving older as well as young generation.
- Planning ahead kit to encourage people in planning their financial, health and lifestyle decisions
- Information centers of older women to disseminate information.
- Protocols to check older women abuse.

## VII. CONCLUSION

Older people can be resourceful and can be assets for the country. They should be treated with love and care and should try to utilize their experience for a better cause.

Women in the society have suffered a lot at every stage of their life. Therefore they also should be given a chance to prove themselves as asset for their family and nation.

Policy strategies that over-emphasize independence, self-reliance and individual responsibility may do so to the detriment of cooperation, reciprocity and interdependence. The underlying activity theory emphasizes the benefits of maintaining the level and pattern of activity of middle age for as long as possible, but has been accused of assuming a simplistic relationship between activity and life satisfaction. For activity to enhance life satisfaction, certain conditions need to be met, including that activities are freely chosen and matched to capabilities. Policy and planning will need to ensure opportunities for involvement in a wide range of activities. Critics seek an increased emphasis on

gender, ethnic and socioeconomic constraints and a greater examination of the meaning and the role of old age.

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## WEB RESOURCES

<http://www.employment-studies.co.uk/pdflibrary/468.pdf>

<http://www.webmd.com/healthy-aging/features/aging-health-challenges?page=5>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ageing>

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