



Diaspora and the Elderly in AVC (Goa) (Research Paper)

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the impact of Diaspora on their elderly parents in the sending society. People always migrate to areas of greener pastures. When members of a family migrate to a distant land, the migration creates a vacuum among the family members of the sending society. In AVC (Goa) large numbers of Roman Catholics have migrated abroad, the migrated are mainly adults leaving behind their elderly parents. The paper attempts to shed light on the implications of such large scale international migration on the elderly left behind. The paper focuses on the implications on the dimensions of social support, economic support and the overall wellbeing of the elderly. Taking case histories and administering questionnaires among the elderly left behind the study proposes that International migration of the young adults may have a positive outcome, where economic support is concern. Whereas, the left behind elderly may not face social isolation if there is considerable support from the community, friends and relatives in the absence of their adult children. Thus, the paper presents that international migration of the adult children can have a positive outcome for the elderly left behind especially where quality of life is concerned.

Keywords: Diaspora, International migration, Elderly, sending society, economic and social support.

Introduction

International migration from Goa to different parts of the world is not something new and there is documented data from at least the 16th century¹. Pearson also states that Goa had been open to the Arabian Sea even before the Portuguese arrived². Nevertheless Goan migration has never been uniform it has been in sporadic form. Gracias classifies Goan migration in to three important phases. First, migration to neighbouring kingdoms that lasted from 16th till the 17th century, Second, migration to British India and African that lasted from 19th till the first half of the 20th century and third, the post colonial migration to the gulf and west that began in 1961 till 1990³. International migration post 1990's has been in all directions of the globe. The International migration in contemporary times has been due to economic as well as social factors. In Goa, the Goan Diaspora contributes significantly to the state GDP. The state received 700 crores in 2008, which is 6.3 percent of the state domestic product⁴. A study undertaken by Centre for Development studies in 2008 (Thiruvananthapuram) presented that emigration from Goa was male centric, wherein 80 percent of the International migrants were male and only 20 percent of the emigrants were females. Thus, emigration has both economic and social impact.

International migration has implication on both economic and social levels and influences both the individual and the society as a whole. The economical effects of migration on sending countries have been widely studied and discussed, and the effects depend on the composition, magnitudes and nature of migration flows and also on which the context the migrants

come from⁵. Migration and development have been linked to its positive and negative aspects. The transfer of remittances money constitutes the most important visible link between migration and development. Today international migration constitutes 3.2 percent of the world's population and 10% of the households in the world receive financial support from the diaspora⁶. Remittances become significant for the country of origin as it contributes to reduce poverty in the recipient households⁶. In the case of Goa 82% of the emigrant households used the remittances for daily subsistence. One third used it for educational purposes, one fourth deposited the remittances in Bank and one fifth used it for building new house and purchasing land⁴. Although the economic impact has been widely studied the social impacts have received much less attention. The social impacts that have been unraveled in certain studies are changes in family patterns, gender roles, children's health and education and cultural effects⁷. In the case of Goa, the social impact has been studied with specific reference to the problems faced by women in the absence of their men. The question of impact that migrated children have on the elderly parents left behind is often neglected but yet significant in the home country because of the increase in the elderly population among the diaspora households especially among Diaspora households. The striking feature of the developing countries like India is that the elderly have always depended on their children for maintenance and sustenance during the old age. Thus, in our study area where large number of adult children have migrated abroad and the elderly are left behind. The question arises that does this have a positive outcome or a negative one because the Diasporic family member cannot be physically present all the time.

Research question: How does international migration increase or decrease the level of assistance provided to the elderly parents. And how do modifications in their assistance impact their social and economic aspects was of significance in our study. These questions have been raised by many researchers across the globe and there are several studies which find answers to these questions that have been presented in the review of literature in paper one.

Methodology

As the study was exploratory and analytical we chose the methods of questionnaire and interviews. Thus, the paper presents the views and experience of the elderly with the help of the questionnaires administered, the questionnaire on social impact was the multi dimensional perceived social support developed by Zimet *et al*⁸ and the questionnaire on economic impact was developed by the researcher⁸. Along with questionnaires, the researcher also tried to capture their experience through in-depth interviews following the case history approach. A series of in-depth interviews to unearth each case history of the Diaspora households and questionnaires were administered in the villages of Assolna, Velim and Cuncolim from May 2014 to May 2015, the table-1 indicates the sample of the questionnaires and the Interviews. It was found that the women outnumber the men in each household.

Table-1
Sample compositions

Place	Case Histories/ Interview	Questionnaires	Male	Female
Assolna	3	20	08	12
Velim	3	20	08	12
Cuncolim	4	30	11	19
Total	10	70	27	43

The study was undertaken especially among those households, where the elderly lived alone or with their spouse or grand children or daughter-in-law with the adult children being absent. A total of 174 households were examined. The table below will help us to know about the composition of the households

From the table above it is evident that the elderly make up 31 percent of the population, which means every third person in the diaspora household is an elderly. Out of these 31 percent it was found that the women elderly are more than double the male elderly i.e. 70 male elderly and 149 female elderly respectively. This is due to the fact that women were found to live much longer in a diaspora household. It was found that within the age group of 60 to 69 the frequency and percentage of male and female elderly was 40 (18percent male elderly) and 73 (33 percent elderly women), in the age group of 70 to 79 the frequency and percentage of male and female elderly was 22 (10 percent elderly men) and 47 (21 percent elderly women) , in the age group of 80 to 89 the percentage of male and female elderly

was 8 (3.6 percent elderly men) and 24 (10.9 percent elderly women), and in the age group of 90 to 99 the percentage of male and female elderly was 0 and 5 (2.2 percent elderly women). Thus, we can see that female elderly live longer than male elderly and therefore female elderly consisted twice the number of male elderly.

It was also found that 39 percent of the households had two elderly members living with other family members (this mainly consisted of Daughter-in-law and grand children). This was followed by 29 percent households having one elderly living with other family members, 14 percent of the households were households where the elderly lived alone or with their spouse without any other family member. Out of these 14 percent, 10 percent of the households were single elderly household, whereby the elderly person lived all alone without any spouse or any other family members and lastly in 17 percent of the households there were no elderly found to be living. Further, 90% of the households that consisted of elderly living with other family members were households that had their sons working on the ship and the gulf. Whereas in the households that had elderly living all alone, 83 percent of these households were those households where their sons had settled with their family of procreation in the developed countries i.e.UK, Canada, U.S etc.

The Impact on Social Support: In this study we first wanted to understand how does international migration of the adult children or their absence from the household effect the aspect of social support?. If we were to answer this question, we have to first try to understand what do we mean by social support. Social support is a very subjective concept and therefore there are various ways of defining it, several scholars have defined it and presented varied dimension of this concept. We shall elaborate on a few of those out of the many more that the researcher has not adopted here for deliberations. According to Shumaker and Brownell social support is characterized as ‘an exchange of resources between at least two individuals perceived by the provider or the recipient to be intended to enhance the well being of the recipient’⁹. Cohen and Syme presented that the resources provided could either have a negative or a positive outcome. Social support being both objective and subjective concept¹⁰, Lin defined social support as ‘perceived or actual instrumental and or expressive provisions supplied by the community, social networks, and confiding partners’¹¹. Having looked at the various dimensions of social support we wanted to measure what level of social support the elderly parents receive in the absence of adult children living with them due to international migration. We looked at a number of scales to measure and found that the Multidimensional scale of perceived social support⁸ was best suited in this study as the scale was a combination of subjective and objective aspects of social support. The MPSS as a scale to measure social support is designed on the basis of taking three significant parameters in the social support of the person, these three parameters are family, friends and

significant other⁸, on each of these aspects there are four questions.

Social Support from family: The Family in any society plays a significant role as an important source of coping with the various adversities that one has to face in one's life. Family support is very crucial in dealing with several emotional and social issues that one encounters in one's day to day life. In developing countries like India, which gives utmost importance to family, family bonds and family relationships, the familial bonds and relationships are based on love and respect for each family member. Traditional societies like India emphasize the respect, love and care for elders, which is looked by the society as a value that all of the society should imbibe. However, in places like Goa (AVC) and especially among the Roman Catholics, where a large number of adult children are working outside India and the elderly are left behind to stay alone or with some family member, the question arises as to what amount of social support is provided by the family in the absence of the adult child or does the adult child's migration hinder family social support. The significant point here is the fact that large majority of the households were nuclear in nature in this case it would be interesting to see what is the level of social support from the family of the elderly left behind?. The table below presents the answer to this question;

The table above is based on four questions that seek to know the perceived social support of the family member of elderly in the absence of their adult children. What can be observed through this table is that in all the four questions more than 85 percent of the elderly respondents stated that they received the required social support pertaining to help, emotional help, discussion of problems and decision making. A look at the comprehensive picture of perceived social support by family members presents that an absolute majority of 92.14 percent answered in the affirmative with reference to how they perceived social support from their family members. This proves that majority of the elderly received enough of attention from the other family

members. However, one might debate this result as to how?. Nevertheless, it was evident from the data that 82 percent of the elderly households consisted of households, where the elderly lived with other family members in AVC. This fact along with my empirical observation is the reason for 92 percent of the elderly affirming themselves to the social support received from the family members. The researchers observation and interaction with the elderly from AVC also brings to light that when the elderly live with other family members in the same house, there is interaction with the other family members i.e. the daughter-in-law and grandchildren as well as one's relatives i.e. siblings and cousins who may visit them. The next question that arises here is, is this the case with the remaining 18 percent who did not live with any family member except oneself or one's spouse?. The answer is a yes; the researcher was also able to find the reason for this answer. The reason arisen through the interaction's with the elderly and the researchers empirical observation is that even though the elderly lived alone or with the spouse, the elderly had visitors to their house in the form of their daughter's who were married in the nearby vicinity, nephews or nieces, cousins and siblings. When these members's of the family visited them they felt good and got ample of opportunities to share one's problems, to seek for any help and support and also to make any decisions if needed to be. However, the elderly also revealed that these visits were more frequent ten years ago, but now the visits are reducing in number. An elderly also stated that 'Only if I am sick then someone comes to visit'.

Social support from Friends: In the absence of the adult children, friends play a very important role in providing support. Friends are one group of people, who are a part and parcel of our life and help us to cope up in each of the stages of our development and role taking, whether it is adolescence or Old age, friends are an important agent of socialization. Thus, in this study friends were also an important component of social support. The table below illustrates social support by friends in AVC.

Table-2
Composition of Households

Category	Frequency	Percent to the Population
Households with two elderly and other Family members	68	39.08
Households with one elderly and other family members	51	29.31
Households with single elderly living alone with no family member	18	10.34
House Holds with two Elderly living with no Family member	07	4.02
Households with no elderly	30	17.24
Total	174	100
Composition of Elderly to the Diaspora Household Population		
Elderly male	70	10.07
Elderly female	149	21.43
Total Population Sample	695	100

Table-3
Perceived Social support from family members⁸

Social support from Family	Response Frequencies		Total	Percentage		Total
	No	Yes		No%	Yes %	
My family really tries to help me ⁸	4	66	70	5.71	94.29	100
I get emotional help and support I need ⁸	5	65	70	7.14	92.86	100
I can talk about my problems with my family ⁸	10	60	70	14.29	85.71	100
My family is willing to help me make decisions ⁸	3	67	70	4.29	95.71	100
Total	22	258	280	7.85	92.14	100

Table -4
Perceived Social support from Friends⁸

Social support from Friends	Response Frequencies		Total	Percentage		Total
	No	Yes		No%	Yes %	
My friends really try to help me ⁸	23	47	70	32.86	67.14	100
I can count on my friends when things go wrong ⁸	26	44	70	37.14	62.86	100
I have friends with whom I can share my joys and sorrows ⁸	23	47	70	32.86	67.14	100
I can talk about my problems with my friends ⁸	27	43	70	38.57	61.43	100
Total	99	181	280	35.35	64.64	100

Social support from friends as presented in the table above was found to be average, where in 64.64 percent stated that they received support from their friends on aspects i.e. help in times of trouble, sharing of happy, sorrowful moments and problems. In most of the aspects on support of friends one see only 67.14 percent as the maximum percentage of perceived social support from friends. The researcher’s interaction with the elderly and his empirical observation points out that, the elderly perceived social support from friends to a lesser extent as compared to family and significant other mainly because majority i.e. 82% of the elderly lived with a family member consisting of one’s spouse or daughter-in-law or grandchildren. In such a case most of them shared their problems with their spouses if they were still living and occasionally they would share with their friends, whereas in the cases where the elderly had no spouse or daughter-in-law they would share with some close relative or a friend. The significant point here is that as the elderly felt less dependent on the friends to share with them. Another reason was the restriction on mobility, as some of the elderly can’t ride a bike or drive a car they were immobile to go to their friend’s house. An elderly when asked stated that ‘My friend came to see me eight months back’ when I said that he should share over the phone or mobile the elderly replied ‘over the phone or mobile you cannot talk everything and there is no privacy in the house’. Another issue during this age of digital world wherein the young generation could be seen easily using whatsapp and facebook to communicate, the elderly were not comfortable with mobile phones some were fine with landline connection but were worried about the telephone bill or whether someone is listening to them. The next reason put forth by two of the elderly men in their late seventies was that ‘they had a friend who was close to them but passed away two years ago’. Thus in the case of AVC what can be observed is that dependency of friends is reduced due to restriction on mobility and the support received from the

family and spouse, while in some cases the dependency could be reduced due to the loss of the friend.

Social support from Significant other: According to the Blackwell encyclopedia of Sociology the concept of Significant others refers to “those persons who are of sufficient importance in an individual's life to affect the individual's emotions, behavior, and sense of self”¹². In the common usage the concept refers to a romantic partner, in the sociological sense it could mean several relationships involving family members and close friends. In our study ‘significant other’ refers to a spouse or a special friend. We have limited the meaning of this concept to spouse or a special friend as the people of AVC wouldn’t understanding its broader meaning and also in order to avoid confusion among the participants, we had to limit the use of this concept. The role of significant other or the support that significant other provide is commonly known to all. However, we wanted to understand, as to what extent social support was provided to the elderly by the significant other. Nevertheless, the significant other is an important component in the concept of social support, without examining the significant other’s social support we couldn’t clearly determine the level of social support in its totality. The table below presents the perceived social support from the significant other.

From the table above it is clearly evident that the significant other is perceived as a high source of social support by the elderly. The average of all the four aspects i.e. being there when needed, to share joys and sorrows, to comfort and share feelings was a high 91.44 percent. This high perception of social support from the significant other was mainly due to the fact that 63 percent of the elderly among the diaspora households lived with their spouses, when we asked an elderly couple in their eighties ‘Whom do they depend upon for emotional aspects?’ there was a loud answer as ‘on each other’. Another elderly said ‘living

together for so many years I can't imagine living without my husband, we fight till today but we cannot do without each other'. However, there were 23 percent elderly who did not have their spouses around as they had already passed away but they had a high perception of social support from the significant other, for them it their special friend was grandchild, daughter-in-law or a special friend from the vicinity who came everyday to talk to them.

Perceived Social support overall: We tried to grade the perceived social support as high, low and moderate. On the basis of the scale adopted from Zimet *et al*⁸. The table below presents the overall picture of the perceived social support among the elderly of diaspora households in the villages of Assolna, Velim and Cuncolim.

The table above presents that a large majority of 64.28 percent perceived social support as high, followed by 34.28 percent who perceived social support as moderate and a very little 1.42 percent of the elderly perceived social support as low. Thus, what can be concluded here is that 98 percent of the elderly had a high or a moderate perceived social support, although 91 percent of them lived in nuclear families. The reasons attributed based on my interactions and empirical observation was that majority i.e. 82 percent lived in households that had their spouse or other family members living with them. In such a case, most of them were content with the arrangements of their living conditions. The physical proximity of friends, neighbors and family provided the ear to hear the elderly when it concerned the most. Though the friends, neighbors and other family members don't interact everyday in most cases, but if an X elderly person was sick or needed help then people would reach out. It can however not be denied that some of elderly in these Diaspora households do feel handicapped when it comes to mobility (moving around), as a result of which they could socialize or meet people when they want, they also found it difficult to share day to day problems and difficulties and also if they had to go to the doctor when sick, this was observed in

cases especially if they lived alone and the elderly in such cases wished for the son or the family members to be present around them.

The Impact on Economic support: The economic impact that the international migration of an adult child has on the elderly left behind have been studied across the globe. Studies show a positive impact in some cases. There have been evidences that increase in income of the elderly due to the remittances received boots the access to health facilities for the elderly left behind¹³. Adhikari *et al* reported that, the elderly left behind in Thailand, who had their children abroad had 22 percent greater opportunity of seeking treatment for their illness due to the increase in their income, the increase income also contributed in the improvement in dietary intake, leisure and living condition¹⁴. According to the economics of labor migration theory, migration is not considered as an individual rational, but an economic strategy jointly made by the migrants and the stayer to pursue maximum household interest and to diversify the family economic risks, benefitting both the migrants and those left behind^{15,16}. Thus the migration may even contribute to family collectivism, as a result of extending the economic output of the families, increasing household income and remittances, and benefitting the elderly with the good and services which cannot be obtained otherwise.

On the other hand studies showing the negative economic impact of international migration on the elderly left behind are very limited. Except for a study in rural Albania¹⁷, in which the elderly left behind felt economically insecure, diasporic children and the remittances they send contributes immensely to the wellbeing of the family and specially the material wellbeing of the elderly¹⁸. Thus, in our study we were also interested in knowing the economic support as perceived by the elderly left behind due to the international migration of their adult child or child's family. The perceived economic support questionnaire had 10 questions. The table below provides us a glimpse of the perceived economic support by the elderly left behind.

Table-5
Perceived social support from the significant other

Social support by Significant Other	Response Frequencies		Total	Percentage		Total
	No	Yes		No%	Yes %	
There is a special person who is around when I am in need ⁸ .	3	67	70	4.29	95.71	100
There is a special person with whom I can share my joys and sorrows ⁸ .	3	67	70	4.29	95.71	100
I have a special person who is a real source of comfort to me ⁸ .	7	63	70	10.00	90.00	100
There is a special person in my life who cares about my feelings ⁸ .	11	59	70	15.71	84.29	100
Total	24	256	280	8.57	91.44	100

Table-6
Perceived Social support⁸ overall

Social Support Overall	Total	Percentage
High	45	64.28
Low	1	1.42
Moderate	24	34.28
Total	70	100

Table-7
Perceived Economic support by the Elderly left behind.

Perceived Economic support	No	Yes	Total	No%	Yes %	100
13. My Child sends me money regularly	9	61	70	12.86	87.14	100
14. I have no problem in accessing the money send	6	64	70	8.57	91.43	100
15. The money send is sufficient for all my needs	8	61	69	11.43	87.14	99
16. The money send is enough for buying medicine	8	62	70	11.43	88.57	100
17. The money send is enough for buying groceries	6	64	70	8.57	91.43	100
18. The money send is enough for buying new clothes	6	64	70	8.57	91.43	100
19. The money send is enough for traveling	10	60	70	14.29	85.71	100
20. All facilities are provided for me in the house	2	68	70	2.86	97.14	100
21. Entertainment facilities are available to me	3	67	70	4.29	95.71	100
22. Sanitary facilities are available to me	2	68	70	2.86	97.14	100

For the purpose of analyses we have tried to demarcate certain questions under certain headings, i.e. receiving and accessing of remittances, use of remittances, and provision of facilities. We have presented them below.

Receiving and accessing of remittances: In our study it was found that 87.4 percent received remittances from their children residing abroad. This shows that a large majority of children felt obliged to send money regularly for the wellbeing of their elderly parents. Interaction with the elderly also revealed that initially when the child went abroad they would send the money in the parents account or through a friend directly to the parent, however after four to five years of marriage money would be send to the child’s wife, if the wife resided with the parents of the son. Though this was reported by some of the elderly parents, this was not true for all the elderly parents, some elderly revealed that they still received money separately on their account. Nevertheless, in cases where the parents lived alone without any family member the money was send directly in their account. Thus, it is not surprising that 87.14 percent of the elderly parents received remittances either directly or indirectly.

Access to remittances was a questions purposively put forth to cross check, what percentage of the elderly who received the remittances had access to it. With reference to this question it was seen that 91.4 percent had access to remittances, which is more than the ones who receive the money regularly. The reason for this difference was mainly because some elderly did not directly receive the money, but they did have access to the money. It was also found that 9 percent of the elderly had no access to money and they were left to fend for themselves. One of the elderly lady from Assolna stated that ‘my son has not

returned home from Dubai for the last 18 years, initially he used to send money in the first five years but after that he stopped, from then on my life is miserable, I pray that he comes home someday’. The plight of these nine percent of elderly is a sorry state. However, 91 percent were pretty content with the remittances they received.

Uses of remittances: The elderly used remittances for various purposes, through my initial interaction at the begging of this study it was found that the remittances were used for buying medicine, groceries, clothes and travelling, though we have tried to elicit the response on needs , we wanted to probe further as to what needs are satisfied. Thus, a look at the table 7.7 above shows that 87.14 percent of the elderly stated that the money send took care of all their needs, whereas 12.86 percent reported that all their needs were not satisfied by the money that they received. It was seen that the money was sufficient in buying medicine for 88 percent elderly; this means that though a larger percent i.e.91 percent stated that the money was sufficient for buying groceries and clothes, only 88 percent of the elderly received money that was sufficient for buying medicines. Further, it can be seen that 85 percent reported that the money send was sufficient to fulfill their traveling needs. This shows that there is greater preference to use the money send on groceries and clothes, which contributed to the insufficiency of money with reference to traveling and buying medicines in greater number of elderly as compared to buying of groceries and clothes.

Provision of facilities: During ones old age two of the facilities that become very basic and must are sanitary and entertainment. These two facilities are very significant as during ones old age one experiences two types of limitation one is physical

immobility and the other is limited socialization. Both of these limitations are interdependent and interrelated, mainly because if one is physically immobile then you can go around visiting other, which in turn limits your socialization and again if someone else is immobile then that person can't come to visit you. Secondly, one's physical disability to climb up or walk may hinder the use of sanitary facilities if it is too far or not accessible to the elderly. Hence, providing adequate sanitary facilities is important to the elderly. Thirdly, with limited access to friends and neighbor life would be boring and so the elderly need some source of entertainment i.e. television and music etc. Thus in our study it was seen that 97 percent of the elderly stated that all their needs were satisfied but when it was asked whether entertainment needs were fulfilled 95 percent stated that entertainment facilities were available to them. This difference was mainly because some of the elderly stated that there was only one TV set and so when they want to see a programme they don't get as the grandchildren or the daughter-in-law want to see their programmes. However, sanitary facilities were available to 97 percent of the elderly. In one of the cases in Cuncolim an elderly man couldn't walk, when probed as to what facility is provided to him, he stated that 'I have a potty and I sit on that, my wife cleans it for me, my toilet and bathroom is in my bedroom'. Whereas in another case a woman in Assolna reported that 'I have a toilet that is built by the government it is an Indian toilet and I find it difficult to sit on it, I wish my son builds a western toilet'.

Economic support overall: From the discussion above it is evident that roughly around 90 percent of the elderly were content with the economic support they received. The table below presents economic support as high, low and, moderate. This demarcation is based on the scale, wherein 1-4 score was low, 5-7 score was moderate and 8-10 score was high. Thus in the table 1.8 it can be seen that 90 percent of the elderly had a high perception of economic support, followed by 5.71 percent who had a low perception and 4.28 percent, reported that they had a moderate perception of economic support from their children abroad.

Table -8
Perception of Economic Support

Perceived Economic Support	Total	Percentage
High	63	90
Low	4	5.71
Moderate	3	4.28
Total	70	100

The Elder's perspective on the absence of their Adult children: The elder's perspective on the absence of the adult children due to International migration is organized in to six major themes; these six themes are borrowed from a study undertaken in Moldova on a similar study by Grant, Falkingham and Evandrou¹⁹. The six major themes are: financial need¹⁹, migration and remittances¹⁹, the emotional costs of separation¹⁹, concerns over care¹⁹, increased responsibilities of older

people¹⁹, the emergence and impact of 'empty' villages¹⁹, the wider impact¹⁹ on 'Goa'. All of these themes have been summarized under the title of 'the experience of the elderly'.

The experience of the elderly: The in-depth interviews with the elderly presented that, the international migration and the success of Goan diaspora helped in the emergence of the Goan dream as well as the success of this dream. The Goan dream is similar to the American dream. However, though Merton refers to five ways of achieving that dream, the majority of the Roman Catholics in AVC fulfil the Goan dream through international migration. Thus, what could be observed in AVC through the interviews and the questionnaires is that the elderly have adjusted well to the absence of their children because some of them were themselves international migrants and had undergone the process of anticipated socialization to foresee the role of elderly and therefore they did not mind the absence of their children as the decision to migrate was a family decision. Thus, the decision of migration, according to the economics of labour migration theory, is not considered as an individual rational, but an economic strategy jointly made by the migrants and the stayers to pursue maximum household interest and to diversify the family economic risks, benefitting both the migrants and those left behind. International migration of the adult children also presents a means of achieving security for themselves as well as their children. As the stable and high flow of income every month in to the household brings prosperity and security for the future. International migration of their children also helps them to achieve status in the society, through the place of migration or the material positions that are displayed it helps them to climb up the social ladder. Although in most cases it is the child that sends money to the elderly parent it may not be so in every case there could be exceptions. International migration of a child does not ensure financial gain for elderly left behind in all cases and they may be left to fend for themselves thereby going through the 'abandonment hypotheses' as seen in the case of the two ladies from Assolna²⁰.

The 174 years of International migration in AVC had contributed to the socialization of the elderly in to expected roles that were played by their predecessors. Hence, 80 percent of the elderly never thought that care was a big concern in the real sense, as most of the households had family support. The villages of Assolna, Velim and Cuncolim being Church and community centric it provided the elderly ample of opportunities to interact with neighbours, friends and relatives, who showed concern for the elderly in times of distress and ill-health. The Church in particular was a great source of opportunity for interaction that helped not only in the spiritual wellbeing but also social well being of the elderly. It is at the Church that the elderly got an opportunity to meet others when they went for mass and interacted with each other, by asking about the wellbeing of each other. The elderly especially women (with an exception of a few men), who were more than double of the elderly men, spend a lot of time in church activities of organizations related to the church i.e. legion of Mary, Parish

council, Vincent de Paul and Charismatic group. The elderly who enjoyed mobility, were able to socialize at several household family functions, which are more like community get-together i.e. Communion, christening, marriage, funeral, birthdays and anniversary of different types. The elderly however raised concerns about their safety due to the rising in-migrants and the increase in thefts and murders in the vicinity.

Since most of the youth in their workable age have migrated the question arises, does this arrangement increase the burden of responsibilities on the elderly parents left behind. The answer was yes in some cases where the responsibility of the grandchildren was placed in the hands of the grand-parents. In spite of all the beneficial aspects of international migration the elderly in AVC raised concerns.

The elderly raised concerns on two aspects in the village, one was of the empty feeling in the village and two was the threat to Goan identity. In the former, the study discovered the gradual emergence of empty village in AVC, although 74 percent of the houses had family members of the migrated residing in the house, in 12 percent of the houses no one was found to be living and 40 percent of these houses were in a dilapidated state. The issue of empty villages is insignificant if one takes the whole of AVC into consideration. However, the emergence of 'empty village' and its socio-cultural impact is observed in one of the wards of Cuncolim, that is Bencleamvaddo. The concept of 'empty' could be viewed from two different angles. One, the literal meaning of 'unfilled' i.e. the *vaddo* had many vacant houses and so it could be referred to as an 'empty *vaddo*' and two is that, the village (*vaddo*) exists in reality but the lack of social activities due to the closed houses and lesser number of active members of the village due to international migration makes the *vaddo* an 'empty *vaddo*'. The *vaddo* of Bencleamvaddo has witnessed a paralysis of its social self as the several socio-cultural aspects of the village are becoming an individual affair. The researcher was able to observe and identify five cultural aspects of the village that are fast moving away from the social character. The five aspects are marriage, funerals, christening, service to the church and disappearance of '*ganvababponn*' (village brotherhood)

Whereas with the latter aspect, the elderly raised concerns about the large scale migration among Roman Catholic youth and now followed by the Goan Hindus and Muslims as a means to sustain families and households. This in turn was reducing the number of Goans in Goa and providing opportunities for non-Goans to fill up all sorts of work that needed labour force. With the reducing fertility rates of Goans due to education, the large scale migration and equal number of in-migrants, there were issues raised about the dwindling number of Goans and threats to the Goan identity. One of the elderly noted that 'if this trend continued then a day will arise where Goans will have a *Ghanti* Chief Minister' and the Mother tongue of Konkani will be replaced by Kannada or Hindi'. Thus, the elderly expressed grief that the government had not done much for the

employment of the youth and there was a need to step up the efforts in this direction.

Conclusion

Through this study we can see that 98 percent of the elderly had a high or a moderate perceived social support, although 91 percent of them lived in nuclear families. The reasons attributed based on the researchers interactions and empirical observation was that majority i.e. 82 percent lived in households that had their spouse or other family members living with them. In such a case, most of them were content with the arrangements of their living conditions. The physical proximity of friends neighbours and family provided the ear to hear the elderly when it mattered the most and the church contributed to their overall social being. However, in cases where physical mobility is restricted socializing with fellow friends and relatives becomes problematic. The study also presents that, the diaspora Goans (adult children) have provided the elderly left behind with high economic support in aspects i.e. buying of medicines, groceries, clothes, travelling and making provisions for sanitary and entertainment facilities. The majority of 90 percent of the elderly seemed to be content with the type of economic support that they have received from their adult children living abroad. The economic gains made the life of the elderly left behind comfortable in the sense they were also in a better position to seek for medical help from the private institution as compared to the elderly with adult children working in Goa. The increase in income gives the elderly the scope to have better access to improved diet, leisure and housing facilities. The socialization experience in the past helped them to cope with the situation better.

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