8.1 Major Findings of the Study

1. The study covered all the three types of old age homes namely paid, unpaid and partially paid or unpaid.

2. Three different forms of old age homes were found in the state of Punjab; government controlled, privately managed and the homes run by NGOs.

3. Admission criteria for inmates was based on the rules and regulations evolved by the respective home. The criteria however varied from home to home.

4. Helpage is an international voluntarily organisation which works for elderly; it is actively engaged in the welfare of aged persons. It also designs the standard criteria to set up an old age home.

5. The old age homes covered in the present study were constructed as per the guidelines issued from time to time by the Helpage India.

6. OAH-1(Home for Aged and Infirm), OAH-2 (Chowdhary Devi Lal Memorial Multi Service Complex Old Age Home) and OAH-(A) (Bhai Vir Singh Birdh Ghar and and OAH-3 (C) Mata Gujri Sukh Niwas, Khanpur) were engaged in providing free of cost services to the older person. On the other hand OAH-3- B (Shri Vivekanand Swarg Ashram Trust, Old age home) has left it to the discretion of inmates to pay and stay or to stay free. It was a kind of both pay and stay and free of cost stay.

7. All the old age homes were having sufficient number of rooms to accommodate the inmates.

8. OAH-2 and OAH-3(A, B and C) had admitted sufficient number of inmates as per the accommodation available. To quote OAH-2 had an intake capacity of 24 and the same number of inmates was residing there. OAH-3 (A) had an intake capacity of 100 and 80 inmates were residing. OAH-3(B) had an intake capacity of 80 and 62 inmates were residing. OAH-3 (C) however had little lesser viz. only 25 inmates were residing against the capacity of 50 inmates. the government run old age home (OAH-1) has enrolled only 27 inmates against the present capacity of 100 inmates.
9. The old age homes were having well constructed buildings. All the OAHs except OAH-1 were offering single occupancy rooms to their inmates. The government controlled old age homes (OAH-1) on the other hand extends dormitory system for living. The building of OAH-1 was under renovation at the time of data collection.

10. Inspite of the fact that OAH-1 was a multi storey building, yet it did not have the lift facility. However, OAH-3-B was also a multi storey building but the lift facility for the inmates was available.

11. It was found that despite the highly spacious area in OAH-1, the frequency of cleaning was limited. OAH-2 and OAH-3 (A, B and C) were quite clean as compared to OAH-1.

12. It was found that in government run OAH-1 almost forty percent of the glass panes of the windows were broken.

13. In OAH-1, there was no separate arrangement for washrooms for male and female inmates. The washrooms suffered from poor ventilation, moreover the bathroom floors were also found to be slippery. Though the OAHs provided attached washrooms but were stinking, slippery and unclean.

14. It was found that in all the OAHs, there were dispensaries for medical aid. Regular visits of doctor were also available in each home except OAH-1. The facility of ambulance van was also found in each home.

15. It was found that OAH-1 and OAH-3 (A) lacked emergency medical facilities for the inmates and referred the patients to nearby hospital. But OAH-2 and OAH-3 (B) had necessary facilities to cope up with the medical emergent situations.

16. In all the OAHs, the inmates were not allowed to participate in cooking on account of their increasing age. Cleaning of utensils was also done by the paid staff engaged by the respective home.

17. It was found that the inmates of all the old age homes were satisfied with the facilities of water supply and electricity.

18. OAH-2 had the facility of washing machine for washing the clothes. But in all other OAHs, there was no facility of washing machine. The clothes were washed manually by the paid staff of the respective home.
19. The provision of common T.V. room was found in all the OAHs except OAH-2 in which separate T.V. set was provided in each room so that the inmates could watch the channels of their choice.

20. Library facility was available in all the OAHs.

21. The OAH-3(B) organised frequent trips to religious places and also picnics for the inmates. However the other OAHs did not resort to this practice.

22. All the OAHs had facilities for indoor and outdoor games.

23. OAH-1, OAH-2 and OAH-3(B) had adequate staff to cater services to the inmates. But in OAH-3 (A) and (C) suffered from the problem of inadequate staff.

24. OAH-1 and OAH-3 (A, B and C) were suffering from inadequate grants as well as delay in release of grants from the government. But OAH-2, did not suffer on account of grants.

25. The management of OAH-2 was harping on the idea of raising more room capacity for the inmates.

26. It was found that the maintenance of buildings, except for OAH-1, was satisfied in all other OAHs.

27. The relatives of inmates residing in OAH-2 demanded increase in the meeting times and they demanded the facility of their temporary stay in the OAH.

28. It was found that in all the OAHs, majority of the inmates were suffering from general old age related/ chronic diseases such as cancer, diabetes, heart problem, osteoporosis, Arthritis, Kidney and bladder problems , Glaucoma, Lung disease , Cataracts Alzheimer’s disease , Muscular degeneration etc.

29. While analyzing the reasons for institutional living, it was found that having only daughters and adjustment problem in family were the main factors for leaving the home by older persons. Lack of companionship i.e. many respondents felt loneliness after the death of their spouses so it was the major reason for shifting to old age home. However, egoism was another cause for institutional living, some of respondents reported that they did not want to be a burden on their sons in old age.

30. Majority of the respondents expressed that it was their personal decision to spend rest of their life in old age home.
31. Many respondents were found to be interested in going back to their respective homes because of various reasons. Some of the reasons were; not feeling comfortable at old age homes; more respectful to live in their own homes; to spend their last time with their children.

32. Many of the respondents however showed their unwillingness to go back to their respective home. Some of the reasons cited by them were; they did not want to be a burden on their children; to be free from their social responsibilities.

33. Regarding the perception about the facilities at OAHs, it was found that the inmates were not satisfied with owing to the absence of basic infrastructural facilities in the close proximity of home viz. market, bank, and post office. Some of the respondents were also dissatisfied with the non-availability of gurudwara, temple nearby the home. In the absence of small trips and tours especially to religious places was also hurting their sentiments.

34. The inmates of the old age homes expressed general satisfaction with regard to the quality, hygiene and nutrition of the food served to them.

35. The inmates expressed mixed response to their participation in the day to day activities of their respective OAHs. All the OAHs encourage inmates to participate in gardening. However in OAH-3 (B) the management of home allowed inmates to participate in number of other activities such as to manage the accounts of old age home and to act as a member of maintenance committee/ admission committee/ catering committee/ purchase and fund raising committee etc.

36. The respondents expressed dissatisfaction with regard to government policies for the aged. They were of the opinion that most of the policies remained in the files and posed a major problem towards the smooth execution of such policies. Lack of awareness amongst the general masses also played a crucial role in this direction.
8.2 Testing of Hypothesis


The national policy made for the older person is treated as a landmark in the history of reforms for the welfare of aged in India. But only the formulation of policy could not give benefit to the beneficiaries until it is implemented properly. It was found that the areas covered under this policy like old age pension and shelter for the older persons (in form of old age homes) had not been fulfilled properly. The amount of the old age pension in Punjab was very low as compared to the other states. There were very few old age homes in Punjab. The existence of single government controlled old age home in the whole of Punjab state reflected the inadequacy and improper implementation of policy made for the older persons. Another major step taken by the government for the welfare of elderly was to formulate the (Senior Citizen Maintenance, Protection and Welfare Act, 2007) facilitating the aggrieved parents to take legal measures against their children. Somehow the act could not go well with the sentiments of the aged.

The analysis of both the primary and secondary data was used to test the Hypothesis 1: The government policies for the welfare of older persons in Punjab are inadequate. The study revealed the given hypothesis stands validated.

Hypothesis 2: “The Administration Of Old Age Homes In Punjab Is Poor.”

The administrative work of all the old age homes was found to be good. The management of their respective offices including maintenance of financial records, registers, and general upkeeps was found to be satisfactory. The old age homes endeavoured to provide all the basic facilities to the inmates necessary for the day to day living. Sincere efforts were made to resolve all the problems of inmates and attempts were made to solve them quickly. Majority of the inmates were satisfied with the dealing of staff due to their cooperative attitude but in OAH-1 and OAH-3(A), some respondents complained that staff occasionally misbehaved with them and used harsh and abusive language. They would intentionally cause delay in extending some of the services.
The analysis of both the primary and secondary data was used to test the **Hypothesis 2**: “The administration of old age homes in Punjab is poor.” The study revealed the given hypothesis stands **partially validated**.

**Hypothesis 3: Older Persons seeks refuge in Old Age Homes due to various reasons:**

a) **Lack of respect within the family forces older persons to seek refuge in Old Age Homes.**

There were various reasons which forced older persons to seek refuge in old age homes in Punjab. While analyzing the reasons for institutional living, it was noticed that lack of respect, domestic problems such as non-adjustable nature of the daughter-in-law and non caring attitude of the son were the significant reasons for opting for institutional living. The aged faced problems due to the weakening of family and community ties, lack of adequate care and loneliness and lack of sufficient space to live in the family forced them to seek refuge in old age homes.

b) **Older person seeks refuge in Old Age Homes because of inadequate financial support in the family.**

Limited resources of family and escalating expenditure of the whole family resulted in unhealthy relations at home. Inmates of old age homes expressed their feelings that owing to their depleting funds they did not want to be a burden on their children in the era of inflation. Thus in the absence of any other suitable alternative they were forced to join old age homes. Many a times they were considered as a burden on the family, since they were not economically productive. Traditionally, the aged felt that the money spent on their offspring was an investment and that in turn they could enjoy and reap the benefits when they became aged. The recent trends amongst youngster’s of being independent are becoming a great hurdle in the smooth and peaceful family culture in India.

c) **Feeling of loneliness forces older persons to seek refuge in old age homes.**

Other factors which were related to the feeling of loneliness of inmates as reported by the residents were that they had no son and in such a situation they were
reluctant to live with their married daughters and those who had the sons but reluctant to fulfil their obligations towards their parents. Lack of companionship was yet another prominent reason for shifting to old age home; many respondents expressed a feeling of loneliness after the death of their spouses, since the children were busy and could not spare any time to interact with the elderly causing remorse and helplessness to the aged.

The analysis of both the primary and secondary data was used to test the Hypothesis 3: the older persons seeks refuge in old age homes due to various reasons: a) lack of respect within the family b) Inadequate financial support in the family and c) Feeling of loneliness. The study revealed the given hypothesis stands validated.

Hypothesis 4: Inmates residing in Old Age Homes are mostly from the poor and middle class families.

The study revealed that the inmates residing in the old age homes had poor and middle class family background. Majority of the inmates of old age homes came from rural areas. Due to urbanisation, the trend of joint family system is being replaced by nuclear families. People migrated to urban areas for their jobs and businesses and thus left their elders at native homes. But due to the high cost of living they cannot save money and provide care for their elders. In this situation, poor and helpless elders seek refuge in old age homes. so the given hypotheses stands validated.

Hypothesis 5: The facilities available in the old age homes in Punjab are inadequate.

Inmates of all the old age homes under study expressed satisfaction with regard to the premises in which they were residing. The buildings were big, well ventilated and airy having lush green lawns. The inmates of all the old age homes expressed satisfaction regarding medical facilities except the inmates of OAH-1, as they were not satisfied with visits of doctor in the old age home. Inmates of old age homes expressed satisfaction with regard to quality and services of food being served to them. Majority of the inmates of all the old age homes were also not satisfied with the facility of outings and trips to religious places. The inmates also showed their dissatisfaction regarding the behaviour of staff members who were rude and authoritarian in nature.
The analysis of both primary and secondary data was used to test the HYPOTHESIS 5: “The facilities available in the old age homes in Punjab are inadequate.” Hence it stands partially validated.

Hypothesis 6: “Old Age Homes in Punjab provide opportunities to the inmates to participate in various activities.”

Active ageing is the process of optimizing opportunities for health participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as per one’s age. Older people who retire from their work, ill or live with disabilities can remain active contributors to their families, peer communities and the society at large. Active ageing allows people to realize their potential for physical, social and mental well-being throughout their life course and to participate in society.

As visualised in the present study, the management of OAH-3 (C) allowed inmates to participate in various activities of old age homes. Management assigned them various designations according to their work in the home like, clerks, cashiers, assistant clerk etc. Various inmates were engaged in managing committees like catering committee, repair and maintenance committee, purchase committee, health committee, fund raising committee. But rest of the old age homes did not allow the inmates to participate in the activities of homes.

The analysis of both primary and secondary data was used to test the hypothesis 6: “Old age homes in Punjab provide opportunities to the inmates to participate in various activities.” Thus, it stands partially validated.

8.3 Recommendations

1. Government should focus on the proper implementation of the policies formulated for elders.

2. Government should not only set up an independent department for the aged in the concerned ministry but should allocate ample funds for the older persons that they could not suffer due to budgetary constraints.

3. Allocation of funds to the old age homes should be enhanced.
4. Government should initiate positive steps to provide/promote/create awareness of Government policies amongst elders as well the general public.

5. Government should ensure that the benefit of schemes should reach to the actual beneficiaries.

6. Government should establish more old age homes. At least one old age home for each district should be the endeavour of the state Government.

7. Awareness programmes, hoardings, street plays at grassroot level i.e. in rural/urban areas could help to spread knowledge regarding policies made for elders.

8. It should be made mandatory to management of all OAHs to train the staff members; so that they could sincerely realise their responsibility towards elderly inmates.

9. A holistic family legislation for older person is needed to project older person’s right to family housing and property.

10. To create awareness amongst older people as how to cope up with adjustment problems with their family members.

11. There is a need to educate children about the need to extend care to the older people in the family and outside and to accept them as a valuable resource for the whole society. The government should undertake suitable measures in helping families to cope up with psychological and economic stress involved in caring for older members.

12. Efforts should be made to change the negative attitude of younger generation towards the elderly by increasing their level of consciousness and utility of the aged in family and community and their potential for development.

13. Proper focus should be given on the cleanliness of OAHs.

14. Government doctors may be motivated to provide free services in the old age homes.

15. The hospitals attached to the medical colleges and other selected district hospitals should organise special geriatrics clinics. Such clinics should have multi-disciplinary approach with facilities for all necessary investigations and if possible for domiciliary treatment.
16. The aged should be given enough opportunities for exhibiting their potential and worth they are capable of doing. The aged have to be kept busy if we want to give them a feeling of self respect, self sufficiency and self worth. And the best way is to allow them to take up any productive work which is also a means of respectable earnings.

17. Government should take initiative to promote NGOs, CBOs and civil societies for the welfare of older people.

18. More and more NGOs should be encouraged to set up old age homes but without commercial motive.

19. Government should provide financial aid and support to NGOs to start new projects for the welfare of older people.

20. The land for the construction of OAHs should be provided free.

21. Significant factors like sex, marital and family status, urban/rural sources of livelihood, religion etc may be taken into consideration for developing policies and programmes for the aged.

22. Government should also focus on the proper implementation of the policies formulated for elders.

23. Topics relating to old age should be added in school/colleges/universities curriculum.

24. Subsidy in electricity/property tax should be offered to the old age homes offering free services

25. Appointment of social workers in the old age homes may be made compulsory.