

Iranian Elderly in Sydney, Australia: A Reflection on Life

Abstract

The growth in the number and proportion of older adults is unprecedented in the history of Australia. Two factors, longer life spans and ageing baby boomers, have combined to increase this portion of population of Australian aged in recent decades. Using qualitative approach, 20 Iranian migrants, aged 65 and over, were selected and interviewed through a 10 months period, in 2016 and 2017. **Conducted in various locations, participants** were asked to reflect upon their social and economic experience in Australia. Most were positive about their lives in Australia, considered themselves as Australian citizen, believed Australians have ‘great deal of respect’ for the elderly, are very “warm” and “respectful” towards their elder generation, utilised various government services, and aimed to facilitate the process of “Australisation” of their children. The result indicates that the life of these elderlies can be enhanced by supporting various social and economic services and, by providing ongoing English language classes, a better quality of life for this segment of the population will be reached.

Key Words- Older people, social issues, settlement, language, qualitative research.

Introduction

Migration is more than just leaving a place and settling in another destination. It has tremendous consequences for those who engage in the process and leave their familiar surroundings and establish themselves in unfamiliar territory. Migrants also have an economic impact on the activities of the settled communities. The receiving county provides the newcomers with various skilled and unskilled jobs, although might be in less desirable jobs, and improves the host country with skilled workers with reduced cost (1). In fact, migrants show a strong resilience and adaptive behaviour to new challenges they face in their early life [2]. They try to take advantage of any opportunities offered them, at least at their earlier settlement [3], in order to establish themselves in the new land. But, despite their ability to adapt to new circumstances there are psychological and mental health issues faced by the newcomers in the new country [4]. In case of Iranian migrants, adjusting to life in Australia and becoming “*Ostraliaei*” (Australian citizen) is an ongoing process throughout their lives. Beyond initial issue of identity [5], migrants had bigger task of adapting to a different language [6,7], new social norms, adaptive behaviors [8] and most important of all finding suitable employment to be able to feed their family [9]. Lack of familiarity with the new social system [9,2] and in some cases experiencing racism and discrimination at workplace [10], lack of accommodation facilities [2] made the life much more difficult for the new migrants, as they tried to establish themselves in the new land. Building desperately needed relationship with the Australian community [8] and establishing supportive groups among their countrymen [2] were some of the hard tasks facing the newcomers in the early years of arrival.

In general, this research study aimed to investigate the social, economic experiences of the elderly Iranian migrants in Sydney, Australia. To facilitate this process, twenty elderly [both males and females] of 65 years and over were interviewed and were asked to reflect on their social and economic life in Australia and how what mechanism they used to encounter and deal with these adversaries.

Background

Migrants and to some extent refugees have a substantial impact on the economy and social life of their new country (11). Economically, they help for the expansion of the market, bringing new skills and creating condition for the increase in employment and decrease the extent of unemployment cues in the volatile service economy, as in Australia [12]. Socially, they improve the social fabric of various community settings by engaging in various formal and informal sports, arts, education, youth activities, and religious organizations [1]. Their settlement in the new country in general are not draining the economic conditions or remedy and rectify the financial difficulties facing the host country and most of all they do not impose on social fabric of life of the country they reside, as it has been suggested in some daily media outlets [13].

The effect of migration on individuals, in this case Iranian elderly, depends on variety of factors associated with this process. Factors such as level of acculturation [14], economic conditions [15], age [16], unfamiliarity with the country's language [17] behaviors and norms [1], level of education (18), social background [19] are some of the features facing the new comers in the host country.

Many migrants and recently new arrivals as refugees, have better skills and know how to modify their behaviour and adjust themselves to the new setting [20]. However, for older generation, using different coping mechanism such as balancing their inherited culture, enrolling in community-based establishments and learning the ways and means of coping with the new social and cultural norm of the new country were means by which they gradually tried to adjust themselves to the way of life in a new settled community [2].

Iranian migration and its consequences

Since the Islamic Revolution of 1979 in Iran, there has been a steady of movements by the Iranians to migrate and settle in various countries, mostly Europe and United States but also in other continents such as Australia and Africa [21]. Prior to the revolution, Iranian migrants had some choice in selecting their place of future residency. However, the period following the escalation of migration, and in recent years refugees, these migrants have had far less choice in the selectin of the country of destination or the time of departure. Such a luxury has been denied more profoundly due to a refusal by many countries to accept migrants, particularly refugees, from any country, particularly people from the middle east [22].

While most migrants from Iran in the early 1980's were educated and had several types of job skills, they still lacked proficiency in English language and therefore unable to appreciate the cultural setting and social behaviour and therefore experienced difficulty in developing social capital [23] in form of linking between themselves and the Australian community at large. These

inadequacies became barrier to their ability to find work, based on their personal skills, participate in educational trainings and cultural activities, common in Australian setting. But they substituted these shortcomings with extra efforts to help their children to achieve and to have a better opportunity to succeed in life in the new country. They mostly cherished the new life, accepted and admired the political system, and appreciated freedom, justice and enjoyed the equality, security and wellbeing presented to them in Australia. As it was instigated “benefit of migration accrues to the second generation, while most of the personal cost of migrating are born by the first generations” [2]. Cultural isolation, separation from the known places and people, difficulty facing unemployment due to lack of recognition of their qualifications and language proficiency, coupled with social stigma attached to their use of welfare system in the new setting and the recent so called “Islamaphobia” [24] were the hardships new migrants had, leading to social breakdown in the years to come.

The assimilation of the Iranian elderly to Australian society is influenced by their social background, their different place of residency, namely rural or urban setting, and time of migration to Australia. In particular, the period of migration has a large impact on how the new migrants received and accepted into the Australian society. The Iranians migrants who were under tremendous political pressure and social troubles to settle in Australia during the mid-1980’s and early 1990’s were almost privileged to have the Australian government on their side with majority of people in Australia quite adaptive to have them settle and take residency in the country.

Iranians in general are not much involved in the traditional political affairs in Australia. They still have input and engagements in various political activities such as gender equality and anti-racism campaigns, same sex marriage protests and environmental demonstrations. However, an incident in the late 2014, put the Iranians indirectly on the political agenda in Australia. The chronological incident started with the preparator Man Haron Monis, an Iranian born and raised to adulthood in Iran, who migrated to Australia in 2001, took ten customers and eight employees in a Lindt Café in Martin Place in Sydney and requested talk with the Australian Prime Minister [25]. Australian media, television, newspaper, declined to identify him as an Iranian throughout the affairs and afterwards. Even though Prime Minister refused to talk to the preparator, but the drama was finally ended with two deaths and score of injuries [26]. The incident created a great deal of anxiety among the Iranian population, particularly the “old timers” as they felt they felt guilty for what has happened and felt lost their innocence among the Australian population.

The 2016 Australian Bureau of Statistics data indicates a rise of the Iranian population in Australia from 39,640 in 2011 to 55,650 in 2017 [27], with mostly living in states of New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland. Such an increase in population however, is not equally distributed in various age groups. Iranian migrants ages 25-35 make up most of this population in Australia [28] mostly residing in urban settings and areas with high employment potentials. The data indicates, there are 12,933 Iranians (23 per cent of total Iranian settlers) calling metropolitan Sydney home. Elderly aged 65 and over are represented in the census with a population of 1,161 person (9 per cent) living in various parts of metropolitan Sydney. The 20 individuals (1.72 per cent) of this population were selected from areas with high level of Iranian population, such north-eastern and western local areas of Sydney.

Methodology

This qualitative research study used a phenomenological approach [29] to examine and explore the economic and social disparities facing Iranian elderly in metropolitan Sydney. Participation in the study was arranged initially through Iranian Community Organisations, and Iranian health professionals including general practitioners and psychologists. Potential participants were then contacted by the chief investigator (FK) who invited them to participate in an interview to explore their experience and views on economic and social well-being, after their migration to Australia. A total of 20 individuals, 9 males and 11 females, were interviewed within a 10 months period (September 2016-June 2017). The length of each interview ranged from 40 to 90 minutes. Participants were asked two open-end questions:

1. What sort of social and economic difficulties did you experience living in Australia?
2. What coping mechanism did you use/you are using to encounter these social and economic difficulties?

Interviews were conducted in various locations, including participants' homes, coffee clubs and local parks. An iPad was used to record the interviews with coffee breaks to facilitate the process. The study was approved by the University of Wollongong Human Research Ethics Committee

Analysis

This study aimed to explore the economic and social difficulties of Iranian elderly in Metropolitan Sydney. Literature on issue of migration indicates that may migrants and particularly new arrivals and refugees have a better skill and know how to modify their behaviour and adjust themselves to the new country they are setting in [30]. However, the older generation of migrants, using different coping mechanisms such as relying on their inherited culture, enrolling in community based establishment and associating with their own community groups are the means by which they gradually adjust to the new way of life in their new settled community [2]. “Ostoralia *Behtarin Keshvare Doniast*” (Australia is the best county in the word) was the first statements made by most of the elderly interviewed for this research. Some participants talked about the moderate climate, others were happy with the society in general and were keen to acknowledge Australian community and people they have dealt with in relation to their work and their current retirement period.

Some participants took a long-term view of the benefits they received for their decision to migrate and settle in Australia. Their initial difficulties in facing loneliness and isolation in a new community was compensated in the long term for the benefits such as enhancement in their safety, security as well as their long-term advantages to their family wellbeing and particularly to their children [31]. They believed facing safety and freedom was a “God given” blessing, which they must value and cherish in the years to come [32]. Majority of participants were reluctant to “accept the old Iranian way of life” and became more “*Hamgoun*” (similar) in their life style with settled community in Australia. This has affected and influenced their dealings with their children, Iranian community in general and Australian society, in particular. As one of the participant stated:

“When we arrived (in Australia) our generation was cut off from the relationship we had back in Iran. We were “*chasbideh*” (together) but on arrival we had a feeling of being left in the wilderness. We had come together and build up a new way of life.

Participant 15

Many participants felt their social and economic prospects had improved, after migration and settling in Australia. This is evident among those who left Iran right after the 1979 revolution and the Iran-Iraq war of early to mid-1980's. As one participant explained:

“Although it was hard for us at the beginning but had to face the consequences. Facing social problems, lack of language proficiency, dealing with hard and sometime laborious work, finding market for your skill, were among the issues we faced at the beginning. But through hard-work we managed to have better economic conditions, could cope with social problems and raise our children to become “*mofied*” (useful) individuals and citizens in the Australian life”.

Participant 2

Economic advantages and benefits they received by joining the labour force were also critical factors for the participants in general and particularly for male migrants. The following comment leaves a light on this view:

“Joining the labour force was not an easy task. Inability to communicate properly in English and lack of knowledge about the way Australian society function was difficult at the beginning. But I started with a simple and basic work and gradually could find a place in one of the companies in Sydney. From then on, our economic condition improved, and I had a better confidence in myself to “*Nan baraye khanevadeh biaram*” (to put food on the table for my family).

Participant 14

Despite differences in their experience with Australia community, participants highlighted their positive opinion about the host country and treatment of the elderly and believed they are very “*Garm*” (friendly) with the old generation and, the country is a good place where many different cultures come together. According to one of the participants:

“The (Australians) are much better than the Americans. Americans are very “cold”, especially for our age group. They (Australians) are very respectful to our age group”.

Participant 20

Some participants expressed their feeling based on the climate and lovely weather and easiness they must deal with life in this country. As it was put in by one of the participants:

“It is the best county in the world...not even Switzerland

gives us that much opportunity as Australia does. You can warm up with a simple heater and cooldown with a fan. Plenty of services and inexpensive goods are the reasons we love this country.”

Participant 6

Family separation and cultural isolation

The separation of the migrants from their homeland and their extended family, a common phenomenon among the Iranian migrants, have become a source of great distress among some of the participants in this study. As it was stated by one of the participants:

“I always say I want to die in Iran. This is a sentimental “*Atefi*” (feeling). Although I am getting a great deal of service from the authorities here, but I prefer to live with limited possessions, in Iran.”

Participant 10

Both male and female elderly try to resolve their social problems in their own way. Men try to spend more time with their friends in their own “male group” and females spend their spare times with their female groups in various community settings such as Tuesday get togethers, biweekly excursions and collective shopping trips. A respectable number of male and female participants found other forms of dealing with the shortcomings, such as inability to work due to old age, lack of regular contact and association with their children and specially their grandchildren by travelling back and forth between Iran and Australia on a regular basis. In some cases, men stayed in Iran more than half of the year and visited Australia to keep up with the family events. This was explained by one of the participants as:

“It seems everything in Iran is better, like large shopping centres, family and friends and having a variety of shops with street much more familiar and community that has been there for ages”.

Participant 16

Such view was supported by some other participants, as they tried to justify their travelling back and forth with more statements such as:

“We like the constant move between Iran and Australia since we have to deal and resolve social problems we are facing in Australia. I think there is a “*Tazade Fekri*” (mental conflict) between Iranian and Australian society. Our relationship with the family and friends are different. You grow up with friends who are willing, whole heartedly, to help you in emergency. Friends here are fine but are not the same as I have in Iran. We have some kind of “*Ghyed*” (bond) with them in Iran.

Participant 16

Dealing with Children

Participants in general believe their children have become westernised, left their ancestor's culture, and behave as Australian. The youth, according to some participants, are not interested in Iranian culture and are seldom associating with the Iranian community and their social get togethers. They have assimilated into the Australian culture, behavior, social norms and find their way in the Australian way of life. For these elderly migrants, adjustment to life in Australia meant a great deal of change and modification in their life style and practices. Beside language inadequacy, dealing with unfamiliar educational system, inability in most cases to have their professional degrees and skills recognised, were some of the problems the new migrants had to deal with, at least in the first period of their migration. These inadequacies were in most cases transferred to new goals in their lives. They put their energy in helping their children to receive the best possible education, support them financially, and were available to give them assistance in raising their grandchildren. These benefits were expressed and eloquently stated by one of the participants:

“Those (parents) who “*Sarmayeh Gozari*” (invested) in their children and help them to become successful in life are just great...But those who throw their children into the “*Jameaheh Nashnakhte*” (unknow world) will face various problems at later stage of life”.

Participant 9

For the Iranian parents then social, psychological and reciprocity of emotional support and practical help through financial backings were important resources for the younger generation to cope and overcome the difficulties in their life.

Relationship with the Iranian Community

With the migration and increase in the population of the Iranians during the 1980's and 1990's, variety of community and social setting were established and mushroomed in big cities like Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. The new arrivals helped to set up or joined various Iranian based community settings, such as “*Shabe Shaer*” (poetry night), community clubs, local outgoing trips, weekly gettogether and various annual social outings such as Iranian new year's celebration, Iranian music concerts and alike. This was described by two participants:

“One thing that has made me happy in this country is that we (Iranians) are separating ourselves from “*Tajamolat*” (luxuries). We have now a lot of contacts with our country folks and helping each other through these gatherings to survive in this country”.

Participants 5 and 6.

Political dilemma

As it was previously elaborated, Iranian community, particularly the older generation are not keen to participate in the Australian political system in general. However, they are still involved and participate in local activities such as pro-refugee's demonstrations, gender equality movements, same sex marriage campaigns and environmental initiatives. Being a small

community with about 50,000 or more residence in Australia, there are less chance of having an input in the local and national arena and obtaining any positive result from their efforts. Although an Iranian born Sam Dastyari was appointed to the Federal Senate by the Labour party in 2013 (31), still he was more involved with the Labor party's general agenda than interest in dealing and influencing Iranian case with the political system in general (Sam Dastyari resigned from his Senate position in the late 2017). However, political and social events of the so called "Sydney hostage taking" in the late 2016 left a great deal of pressure on some members of the Iranian community, both in Sydney and throughout the country. As it was expressed by one of the participants:

Iranian community were very much concerned about the event taking place in Martin Place. They felt the preparator "*Aberoye Mara Bord*" (disgraced) caused a great deal of disgrace, loss of honour, reputation and left a great deal of anxiety and apprehension for the community".

Participant 12

Such an event left its impact on the Iranian community differently. The outcome was extensive for the older generation and their apprehension on what would be the result of such events on their children and community at large. Reflecting on the issue and elaborating on the elders thinking one of the participants stated:

"Those events had more impact on vulnerable people, such as elderly, than the general Iranian population at large. Those who are in constant state of "*Negarani va Tars*" (worries and fear) were more effected. May be their reaction to these has to do with having free time and not to worry about daily tasks of trying to cope with the daily life."

Participant 11

Although race and racism were not particularly identified as an exclusive problem for the participants in this study, a feeling of exclusion from the Australian society was articulated by a few participants. One participants stated that:

"When facing authorities, especially as an individual working in an organisations, sometimes you are judge by who you are and where you are coming from. It might be discrimination, such as encountering with the police or health care workers in various organisations. Here is where you can see and feel discrimination against you and the country you are representing."

Participant 1

However, participants, comparing Australia with other countries, such as Europe, were less content to consider Australia as a racist nation. As one of the interviewees explained:

"Compare to other countries, let say Europe, Australian community is less racist and more tolerant of others arriving

from overseas. I think difficulties facing us, particularly elderly, has to do with our personal social seating. i.e., where we come from (cities or urban settings in Iran), what type or degree of education we had, how religious we are or even what television programme we watch”. **Participant 12**

Generational differences

Some individuals highlighted the differences between themselves, as early migrants, and those who are recent arrivals. Elderlies saw themselves as people who got to this country two decades ago, tried hard and tolerated a great deal of difficulties to set themselves and their family in this country. They believe the new comers on the other hand, are arriving in much better economic and social conditions, but are asking and requiring more services and handouts from the government and alike. This was expressed by one of the participants:

“I do not know how the new comers think. They think this country owes them something. They are lucky they got here. They just keep asking for services, money and think they should be put in good jobs, as soon as they arrive. They do not know they have to try for it. They must put their efforts in getting what they want. **Participant 11**

Overseas qualifications and Communication

One of the key indicators of success of migrants to Australia is their proficiency and skills in the use of English language. Use of the language as a means of communicating with the service providers was one of the problem facing participants, particularly in time of crises. This has tremendous effect on the degree by which migrants could interconnect with the host society and find employment, resolve their health problems, move along and establish themselves in their selected community. In Iranian case, the newly arrived migrants of 1980's and 1990's were less sufficient in local language than the new-comers in the recent decades. Lack of skill in dealing with the daily chores of life, due to lack of English language proficiency was explained by one of the interviewees:

“There were are and still some difficulties with elderly Iranians in Australia. In addition to inability to talk comfortably in English, finding places like Centrelink's office, or building friendly relationship with your neighbours, become aware of the daily news were some of the difficulties we had at the beginning.” **Participant 3**

Verbal communication with the General Practitioners (GPs), attending government organisations to obtain services, finding a job and trying to fit into the Australian way of life, were among the issues raised by some of the participants. This was explained in one of the interviews:

“Economic problem was one of the hardest issues we had to

deal with at the beginning. Finding a job with language difficulties was very difficult. At the same time, we had to deal with raising our children, deal with health problems and finding an Iranian GP who could speak our language and communicate with us.”

Participants 1

The ability to use overseas qualification was and still is one of the problems facing Iranian migrants in Australia. This was more evident with the arrival of Iranian migrants during the 1990's. Those migrated to Australia during this time were younger generation, engaged in educational and economic activities in Iran but seldom with higher educational degrees [32]. Upon arrival, they had a hard time in finding relevant employments in their field and ended up working at low level and under registered employment with lower pay and low level of job security. One of the participant elaborated on this issue:

“Finding a job was difficult for me. Although I had a good job in Iran, prior to my migration, still finding a job that was relevant to my skills was impossible and difficult to find. I ended up with a few jobs, with low pay and in most cases non-permanent.”

Participant 1

Intercommunication framework

The key issue in community participation is proficiency in communicating. Lack of English proficiency had impact on the new migrant's relationship with their Australian counter parts, leading to isolation and separation at later stage. As a result, new Iranians, particularly women, developed and set up their own community organisations and relied on them for social gathering and one-on-one or even groups discussion on various topics of interest in general. Through these community setting they served to nurture and support each other and enhance quality of life of their members. Talking with members of one of these communities, one of the members stressed that:

“Iranian women are more flexible than men. They are well prepared to find a job, of any kind, and go through the hardship more than men. They are better at participating in groups and try to have a more active life than men. Men on the other hand are less dynamic and more “*Parkhashjou*” (quarrelsome).

Participant 5

Discussion

In reply to the two main questions addressed in this study, social and economic difficulties faced by the new migrants in Australia and how they dealt with it, there seems to be a few common themes and specific comments made by participants. As such, participants talked about issues related to their experience as the new settlers in this country. Some talked about environment (do not see much difference in seasons here, all are the same), others were happy with the society

in general and were keen to acknowledge Australian community and people they have dealt with in relation to their work and their current retirement period.

Participants in the study see the Australian society as tolerant towards new comers and willing to accept them, regardless of their place of birth, country of origin and religious associations. There was a substantial agreement among the participants regarding the benefits they received by migration to Australia. Some felt they were somehow isolated and feeling lonely at the beginning of their migration to Australia but in most cases, they had overcome this feeling and saw themselves as part of the Australian society. Their aim more than anything else is to help their children to become good citizens and establish themselves as "*Arzeshdar*" (valuable) member of their community. Still a few see themselves under stress, as they had to leave Iran, separate themselves from a life they were accustomed to and many friends who were available to help them, if needed. The issue of stress was also manifested in some other cases for this group. The 2014 Martin place incidents left many Iranians, particularly elderly, with a lot of stress and anxiety as the event was unfolding in the Central Sydney.

The issue of race and racism was not directly questioned in this study. However, for a few there existed some race related issues facing Iranians, particularly elderly in the Australian society. They faced and experienced the issue when renting a property, obtaining work, dealing with police and registering their kids in school, as a tendency by some Australians towards other races.

English language proficiency and lack of ability to communicate with their Australian counterparts were expressed by most respondents. However, it seems men have more difficulty with this deficiency than women. Women were more into communicating with the Australian society than the males. Women have mostly established and taken part in groups, either Iranian based or Australian dominated get togethers. Men also had more difficulty associating with Australian community as they felt they are not tune with the social behaviour, exhibited by their counterparts in Australian society. They thought they have conflicts in political issues, behaviours and communication with the Australians society and tend to be more individualistic than women.

For the elderly participating in this study, improvement in their economic wellbeing and to some extent social comfort lead them to a better quality of life due to their migration. They reached these thresholds, i.e., social and economic security and participating in economic activities, organizing themselves around Iranian based social groups, clubs, regular poetry nights, occasional picnic and sightseeing excursions.

Such a positive view about migration and settling in the new county, however had a negative outcome as well. Lack of English skills appears to present a major barrier to participation in social and economic life in Australia. Furthermore, lack of opportunity in getting proper employment and inability to remain in the selected position due to in-proficiency in the required skills increased the chance of being dismissed from their employment.

In the meantime, quality of life for female Iranian migrants, settle in the early 80' s until late 90's was much different than with men. For one, those interviewed, felt they more satisfied with their lives than men. This was much evidence by their regular contact with their friends, participating in community outing and "only women get-togethers" and regular contact with government agencies for various needs.

Conclusion

Migration is often challenging and a life changing experience. The promise of better life, fresh start and getting away from an uncomfortable life in the original county are some of the factors that are generally expressed by the new comers. But there are other factor associated with these moves.

First, migrants who are settled in a well-received and relatively respected new place seem to have valuable experience leading towards a relatively more comfortable life in the years to come. Those Iranian migrants establishing themselves in large cities such as Sydney maintained a strong return over their lives, resulting in strong ties with the community and population in the old age. The fact that these migrants show a higher level of life satisfaction at old age may support the conclusion that migration experience provides a long lasting positive and durable impact on their life.

Second, the act of migration represents a foremost breakdown in work, career and most of all disruption in family connection (so important in Iranian culture), to a common and mostly low-level job status in their early migration period and settling in a new environment. This means, regardless of their educational background, economic success and individual prosperity their early experience in Australia will have less influence in their early settlement and future success in their new life. For the new comers in the 80's and 90's the ability to obtain a job and employment had to do with the job opportunities existed in those two decades and social interest among the Australian population towards new migrants in Australia.

Third, the conducted interviews seem to suggest that most Iranians now living in Australia do not **want** to return to Iran, like to be an "Australian" and live comfortably in various part of this continent. Overall, the level of satisfaction with living in Australia and being safe in the country was high among the elderly interviewed.

Fourth, there seems to be a high degree of integration of the Iranian elderly in the Australian society due to the positive policies and mainstream society in accepting and valuing non-Australian culture and identities. Elevated level of satisfaction within the Iranian elderly with the Australian social and economic welfare indicates a strong tendency for them to keep the elements of their own Iranian culture but quite willing to integrate with the new way of life in their new settings.

Fifth, these interviews suggest that migrant's children are a significant part of the contribution made by the old migrants to the Australian way of life. As it was described by the participants,

the age-old desire of parents working hard to enable a better life for their children and plain family is their main reason for migration to Australia.

Recommendations

To summaries and recommend for further studies and possible government interventions, there is a great need for backing and support of the Australian government to bridge the gap by enhancing opportunities in the areas of resources and services available to the Iranian elderly, especially women. This means improving employment opportunities and enhancing their employment prospect will have a tremendous effect on their quality of life in the years to come. Establishing proper and non-discriminatory policies to reduce stress of the old age settlement process will increase the chance of better adjustment to the life in a new country for the Iranian migrants in general and elderly in particular. In addition, availability of English language classes, beyond a few sessions and at the beginning of arrival for migrants, needs to be extended and made possible for the migrants to attend these free classes on a regular basis and in their own time.

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