Neighborhood based support services for the well-being of older adults in Indian urban neighborhoods

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Aim of the study

Exploring the neighborhood based support services for the elderly and their influence on the overall perceived Quality of Life (QoL) of Indian elderly

Objectives

- Study of the existing set of neighborhood based support services for elderly or older adults in different neighborhoods in Kolkata, India
- Understanding if the presence or absence of neighborhood based support services influences the perception of overall QoL of elderly.

Methodology

Step 1: Understanding of the need for neighborhood based support services for the elderly in contributing to the overall QoL of the elderly

Step 2: Exploration of the varied types of neighborhood based support services for the elderly from literature

Step 3: Identification of the existing varied types of neighborhood based support services in the study area

Step 4: Exploring the influence of neighborhood based support services on the overall QoL of the elderly

Background

- The Indian joint family structure is gradually depleting due to the shifting of youth away from their home (Ugargol, Hutter, James, & Bailey, 2016).
- Since a significant proportion of the Indian elderly still prefer to depend primarily on family based intergenerational support, this situation is likely to create a sense of insecurity and uncertainty among the Indian elderly.
- Deteriorating health conditions negatively influences the independence of the elderly, their social participation and social relationships which consequently leads to an overall decline in their QoL (Bowling, 2011).
- Presently, India lacks a holistic system of external support services which can cater to the daily care giving of the elderly.

Background

- The contribution of community and neighbourhood based support services to the overall well-being and QoL of the elderly has been established by various studies (Muramatsu & Hedeker, 2016; Siegler et al., 2015; Zhang, Yeager & Hou, 2018).

- The expense involved in institutional care, also creates a need to promote aging-in-place and equipping the neighbourhood environment to accommodate the needs and requirements of the elderly, thus helping them to live an active, independent life, particularly in case of populous and poor countries.

Background

What are neighbourhood based support services?

The concept of Neighbourhood based support services (NBSS) are similar to home/community based services (HCBS) which aim at providing health and social services to support the elderly, patients and their care-givers.

It includes services which provide wellness programs, nutritional support, educational programs about health and aging, counselling services, general assistance with housing, finances, safety, etc (Siegler et al., 2015).

In this study, we also relate NBSS to the concept of Long-term care (LTC) which aims at providing services for people with disabilities (Jervis, Jackson, & Manson, 2002).
The services include various forms of assistance which the elderly have been traditionally receiving from their family: provision of companions during evening walks, gardening, reading or writing, meals on wheels, daily grocery or medicine delivery services, house cleaning, travel guides and other activities of daily living.

Background

Quality of Life

Objective

deals with externally observable characteristics, such as financial, educational, social and living arrangements

Subjective

deals with an individual's perceptions of various aspects of life based on his/ her personal history, attitudes, emotional and physical status. The subjective approach to defining QoL was also recommended by the World Health Organisation

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines Quality of life, as *"individuals' perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value system in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectation, standards, and concerns"*

Background

Saha, Basu & Pandit, 2020

Neighborhood based support services for the elderly from literature

Health

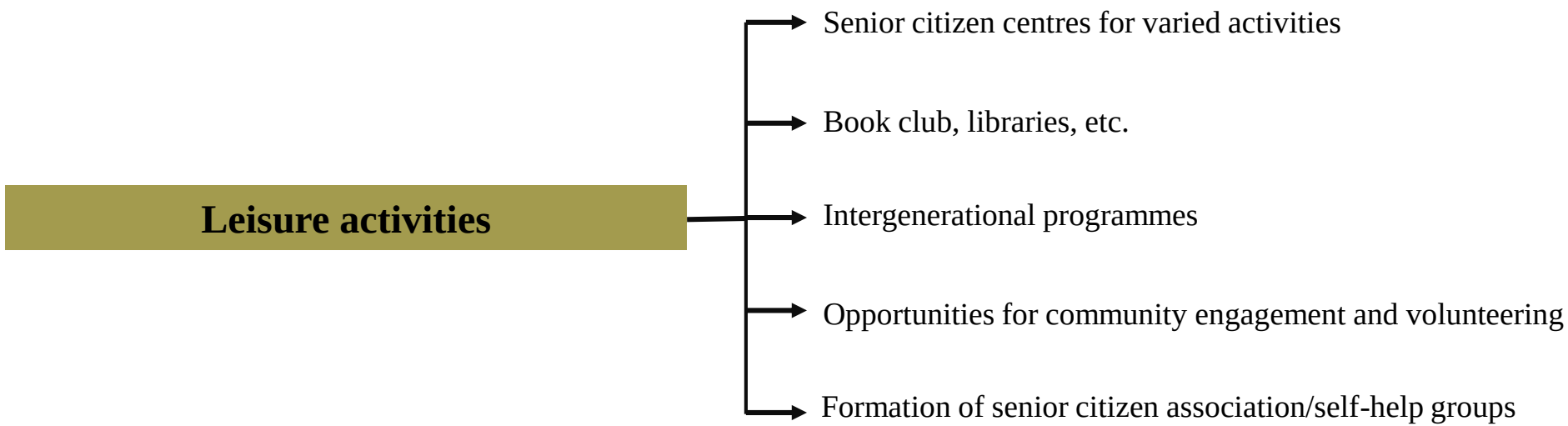
- Medical waiver programmes
- Mobile Medicare clinics, Ambulance services, Home delivered physical therapy
- Public awareness campaigns, Extensive education and communication programmes
- Daily activity-based support services
- Training programmes on fall prevention, Community-based falls registries and surveillance systems
- Programme for improving dietary intake in elderly, Nutrition services, Home delivered meals
- Specialized geriatric health services, Nursing assistance services
- Physical exercise classes, Initiative by the community to promote physical activities, Regular exercise and health education
- Pollution control and maintenance of hygiene and cleanliness in the neighborhood

Neighborhood based support services for the elderly from literature

Social activities and relationships

- Programmes for providing companionship
- Charitable or community organization for involving the elderly
- Adult day-care services
- Telephone befriending services
- Programmes for sensitization of youths towards the needs of elderly

Neighborhood based support services for the elderly from literature



Neighborhood based support services for the elderly from literature

Sense of safety and security affecting Level of independence

- Provision of personal and home care workers
- Communication guide services
- Provision of assistive technology

Financial stability

- Health insurance programme
- Senior housing programmes
- Financial advisory services

Neighborhood based support services for the elderly from literature

Life and Self perceptions affecting emotional well-being

- Social activation and participation programmes
- Counselling services for caregivers
- Helpline and counselling services for elderly

Study Area

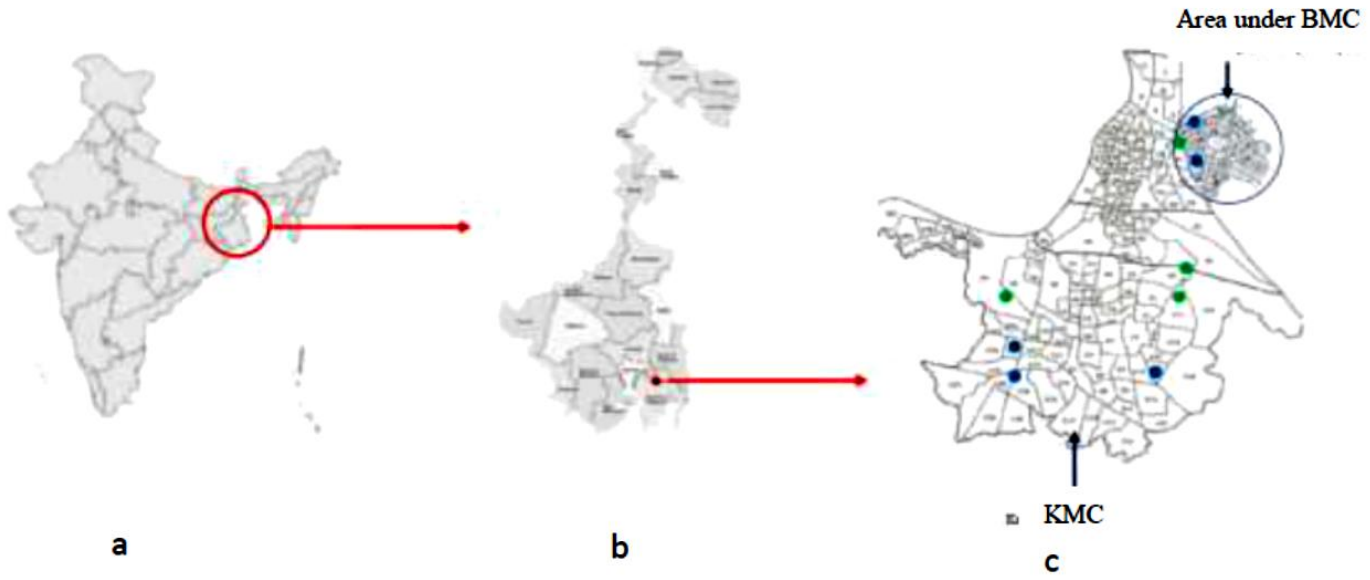
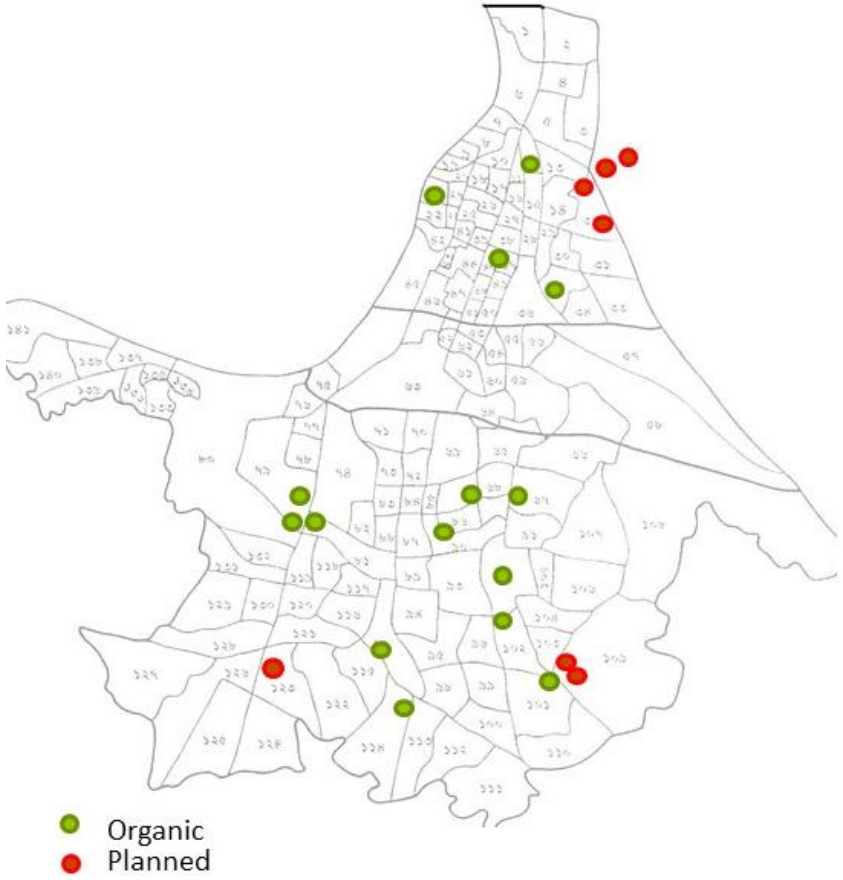


Figure 4.1: a) Location of West Bengal in India, b) Location of KMC and BMC in West Bengal c) Location of study areas in KMC and BMC

Image Source (Maps) : a) https://indiantribalheritage.org/ b) https://d-maps.com/ c) https://commons.wikimedia.org/ (KMC), medium.com (BMC)

Study Area



Neighbourhood Category	Neighbourhood names
Organic	Bansdroni, Parnasree Pally, Netaji Nagar, Santoshpur, Lake East Road (Santoshpur), Fern Road (Ballygunj), Shobhabazar Street, Baghajatin, Telengabagan, Surjonagar (Haridebpur), Tollygunj slum, Subhasnagar, Lake Garden, Garfa, Garden Reach, Rajabajar, New Ballygunj, Duttabad, Haridebpur, Behala, Barisha, Kudghat, Chetla, Hindustan Park, Tollygunj, Dhakuria, Jadavpur, Kudghat, Garia, Maniktala
Planned	Karunamoyee Housing, Upahar, Ruchira, Philips Housing (behala), Police quarters CIT scheme (Phoolbagan), Purbasha, Labony, New Garia, Salt Lake

Socio-economic characteristics of respondents

Sample size: 356

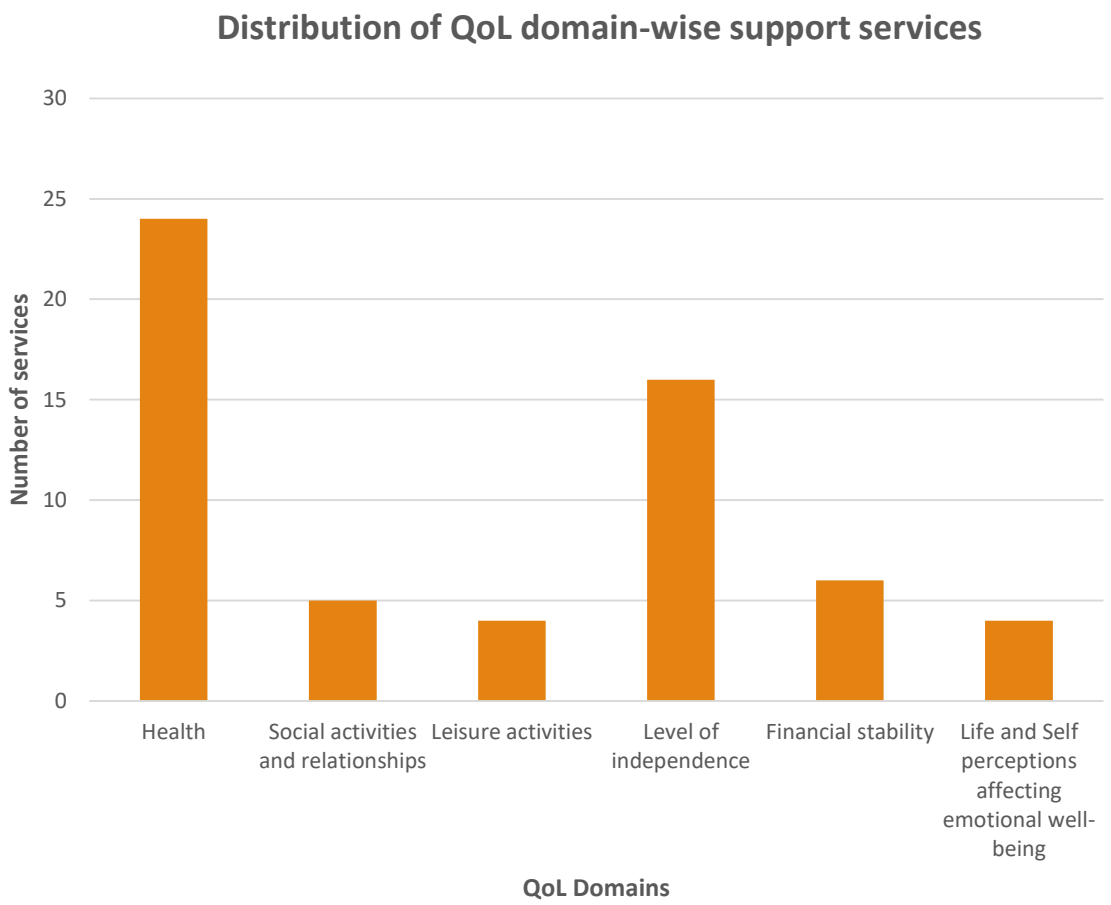
Survey questions included:

1. Types of support services existing in the neighborhood based on the QoL domains
2. Satisfaction rating of overall perceived QoL

Socio-economic characteristics	Kolkata (% of total sample)
Gender	
Male	70.8
Female	29.2
Age (in Years)	
60-69	54.9
70-79	34.1
Above 80	11
Education Qualification	
Illiterate	7.4
Primary	17.9
Secondary	14.3
Senior Secondary	11.5
Graduation	36.1
Post-Graduation	12.3
Monthly Income (in INR)	
Less than 10000	21.9
10001-15000	15.5
15001-25000	22.9
25001- 40000	16.2
More than 40000	23.8

Existing neighborhood based support services identified in the study area

Distribution of QoL domain-wise support services across all the neighborhoods



Existing neighborhood based support services identified in the study area

Health

24x7 ambulance services for elderly
Help from local youth and volunteers appointed by municipality or the neighbourhood for elderly care
Regular spraying of mosquito repellants in mosquito prone areas
Organisation of awareness programmes on physical exercise & outdoor visit
Collection of blood, stool samples, etc. from home by diagnostic laboratories or volunteers
Organizing regular home visit of medical doctors/ professionals
Provision of trained ayahs and elderly care givers for those in need
Control of stray dog population
Regular check on pollution levels in neighbourhood
Smoking fines to be enforced on smokers for smoking in public areas
Availability of assistance (helping elderly in daily activities) on call
Organizing regular home visit of medical doctors/ professionals
Training on fall prevention programs & regular checks on falls of elderly
Appointment of trained elderly care givers through NGOs/ local clubs
Provision of trained ayahs and elderly care givers for those in need
Awareness programs on alcohol consumption
Organisation of awareness programmes on physical exercise & outdoor visit
Quality control of food sold in markets by local municipality
Spreading awareness of health aids available for various needs of the elderly
Providing required health aids to those in need
Training on use of health aids
The establishment and expansion of effective distribution systems of fresh vegetables and fruits from local farms to urban areas through:
Tie-up with health service companies for delivery of health aids to the homes of elderly and training on the use of the same
Training family members on ways to stimulate appetite of the elderly

Existing neighborhood based support services identified in the study area

Social activities and relationships →

Help from local youth and volunteers appointed by municipality or the neighbourhood for elderly care
Organisation of loneliness mitigation services encouraging group activities of elderly
Organisation of trips with transport guide
Community Outreach programs carried out in places where older adults feel comfortable
company on call services

Existing neighborhood based support services identified in the study area

Leisure activities	Supply of books to the homes of elderly by the community library or from nearby library by local youth
	Organisation of trips with transport guide
	Community Outreach programs carried out in places where older adults feel comfortable
	Conducting programs to educate elderly on use of modern technology

Existing neighborhood based support services identified in the study area

Sense of safety and security affecting Level of independence →

Neighbourhood watch conducted by volunteers (local youth) or security guards employed by the neighbours
Legal counselling at subsidised rate
Help from local youth or ngo in lodging complaints with local police
Conduction of regular fire check services for elderly homes
Arrangement of security guard for elderly living alone
24X7 helplines for crime control
Generating awareness about services for helping needy people, through newspapers, leaflets or phone calls,etc. by NGOs. or local volunteers
Provision of safety guidelines to elderly from the community police
Availability of assitance (helping elderly in daily activities) on call
24x7 on call helpline services
System of registering road related e-complaints at the municipality/ corporation
Provision of trained ayahs and elderly care givers for those in need
Conducting programs to educate elderly on use of modern technology
Help from local youth or ngo in lodging complaints with local police
Provision of basic ration services to the elderly in need
Updating elderly on recent cases of fraud and con games through neighbourhood newsletter, leaflets, etc.

Existing neighborhood based support services identified in the study area

Financial stability	Provision of basic ration services to the elderly in need
	Formation of self-help groups for the elderly by NGOs, private or governement organisations working for the elderly
	Spreading awareness of financial assistance programs from government
	Organisation of elderly recruitment drives in neighbourhood
	Provision of selling carts (self-selling) for selling home-made products
	Provision of subsidised transportation services to the elderly

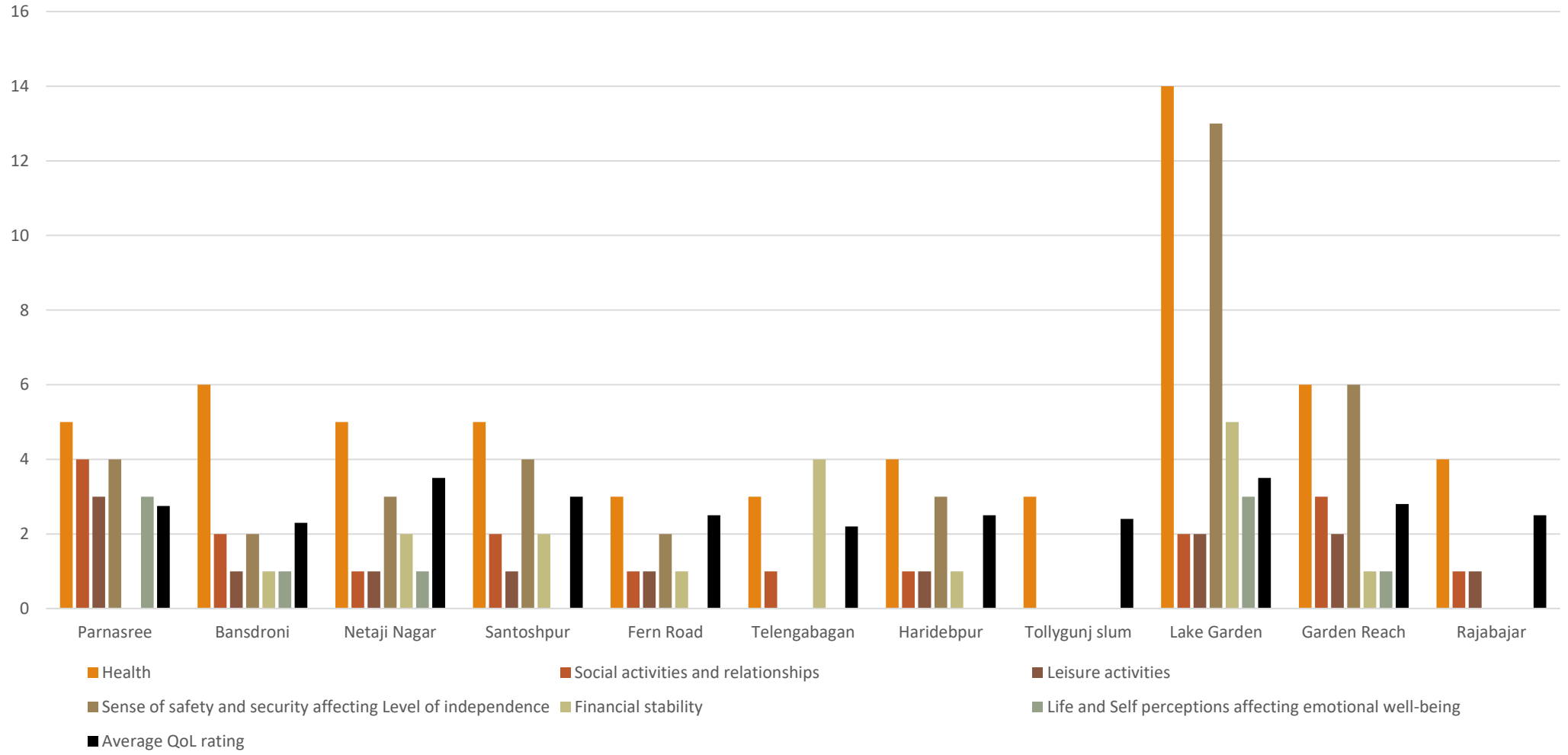
Existing neighborhood based support services identified in the study area

Life and Self perceptions affecting emotional well-being	Organisation of loneliness mitigation services encouraging group activities of elderly
	Inculcate sense of empathy in local youth and family for the elderly through awareness or educative programs
	NGO Educating family members about the needs of elderly
	NGOs involving in Counselling of family members and elderl

Existing neighborhood based support services identified in the study area

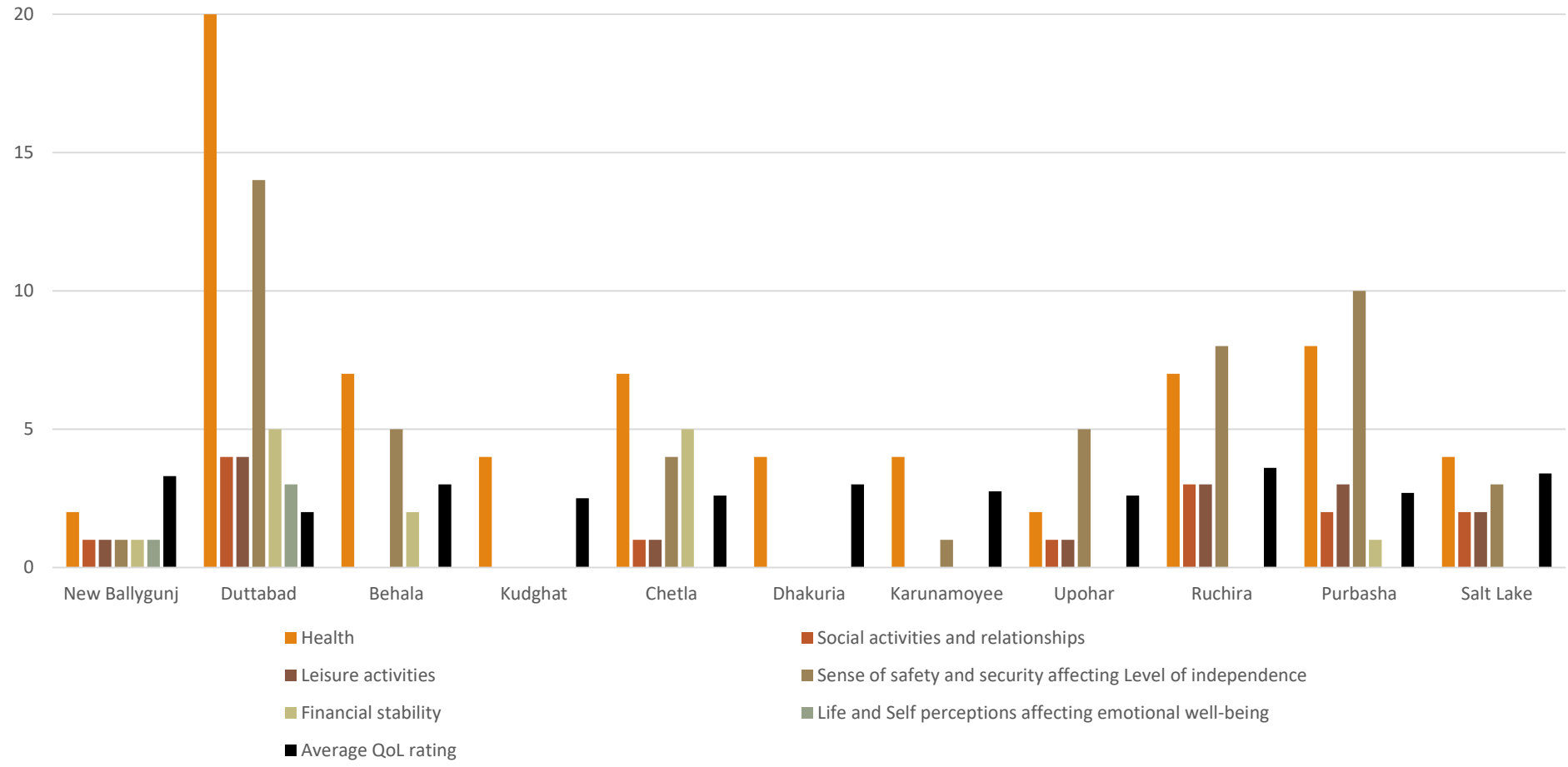
	Health	Social activities and relationships	Leisure activities	Sense of safety and security affecting Level of independence	Financial stability	Life and Self perceptions affecting emotional well-being	Average QoL rating
Parnasree	5	4	3	4	0	3	2.75
Bansdroni	6	2	1	2	1	1	2.3
Netaji Nagar	5	1	1	3	2	1	3.5
Santoshpur	5	2	1	4	2	0	3
Fern Road	3	1	1	2	1	0	2.5
Telengabagan	3	1	0	0	4	0	2.2
Haridebpur	4	1	1	3	1	0	2.5
Tollygunj slum	3	0	0	0	0	0	2.4
Lake Garden	14	2	2	13	5	3	3.5
Garden Reach	6	3	2	6	1	1	2.8
Rajabajar	4	1	1	0	0	0	2.5
New Ballygunj	2	1	1	1	1	1	3.3
Duttabad	20	4	4	14	5	3	2
Behala	7	0	0	5	2	0	3
Kudghat	4	0	0	0	0	0	2.5
Chetla	7	1	1	4	5	0	2.6
Dhakuria	4	0	0	0	0	0	3
Karunamoyee	4	0	0	1	0	0	2.75
Upohar	2	1	1	5	0	0	2.6
Ruchira	7	3	3	8	0	0	3.6
Purbasha	8	2	3	10	1	0	2.7
Salt Lake	4	2	2	3	0	0	3.4

Existing neighborhood based support services identified in the study area



Distribution of QoL domain-wise support services and overall QoL rating across different neighborhoods_part A

Existing neighborhood based support services identified in the study area



Distribution of QoL domain-wise support services and overall QoL rating across different neighborhoods_part B

Conclusion and way forward

- The study has identified the holistic set of support services that can cater to the QoL of elderly.
- The study findings reveal that among all the domains, the support services catering to the domain of Health exist in almost all the study areas.
- Though the study findings show a positive influence of the number of support services on the overall QoL of the respondents, the findings from one particular study area also reveal that the mere presence of support services is not enough to ensure satisfaction with overall QoL. Access (spatial and financial) to these support services are essential to ensure efficiency.
- The limitations of the study include the sample size and sample distribution. The study framework can be applied on a larger sample to validate the influence of the support services on the overall QoL of the elderly.
- The future scope of work can include the influence of socio-economic characteristics of respondents on the satisfaction with the support services and consequently on their overall QoL.

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- Some findings from this paper is also a part of the doctoral thesis submitted at the Department of Architecture and Regional Planning, IIT Kharagpur by the first author.
- The first author had conducted the research work for this paper during her Ph.D at the Department of Architecture and Regional Planning, IIT Kharagpur, India.
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Thank you