

# GERIATRIC HOMICIDE AS SOFT TARGETS IN TAMIL NADU: PATTERNS, MOTIVATIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

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**Abstract:** India is experiencing a rapid increase in its elderly population, projected to reach 20.8% by 2050 and 36% by the end of the century, according to a United Nations Population Fund and International Institute for Population Sciences report. Despite policies such as the 1999 National Policy on Older Persons and the 2007 Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, crimes against senior citizens are on the rise. The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) started tracking crimes against seniors in 2014, with a significant increase from 1,841 cases in 2021 to 2,376 in 2022. Geriatric homicide, defined as the murder of senior citizens, is of particular concern. Tamil Nadu tops the list with 201 cases in 2022, followed by Maharashtra (198) and Madhya Pradesh (129). This study aims to analyze the magnitude of geriatric homicides in Tamil Nadu, the underlying reasons for such crimes, and the effectiveness of welfare schemes and policies in place. The paper adopts a qualitative, doctrinal approach, examining various reports, statistics, and news sources. The objective is to assess the measures taken by the Tamil Nadu government to combat geriatric homicides and provide better protection for its elderly population.

**Keywords:** Soft Targets, Geriatric Homicides, Senior Citizens, Tamil Nadu Police

## INTRODUCTION

Population aging has become a universal trend, with every nation witnessing an increase in the number and share of older adults within their populations. This shift is an unavoidable demographic reality, largely driven by advancements in healthcare and medical services (United Nations, 2021). As people live longer and fertility rates decrease, the population of individuals aged 60 and above is expanding at a quicker pace than the overall population worldwide (World Health Organisation, 2020). This process, known as population aging, brings significant implications for the socioeconomic and health conditions of the elderly as the average age of the population rises and they consider as soft targets in the society (National Institute on Aging, 2019). The various problems faced by senior citizens can be categorized into four types they are economic problem, physiological problem, housing related problem and crime against senior citizens (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, 2020).

Each year, the United Nations (UN) observes October 1st as the International Day of Older Persons, dedicated to advocating for the rights and welfare of senior citizens across the globe (United Nations, 2021). For 2024, the UN selected the theme, "Aging with Dignity: The Importance of Strengthening Care and Support Systems for Older Persons Worldwide." This theme emphasizes the need to build robust care frameworks and support networks to ensure older adults experience respect, inclusion, and dignity as they age, underscoring a global commitment to improving the quality of life for the elderly (Elderly in India Report, 2021; United Nations, 2024; World Health Organization, 2021).

## DEFINITION AND RIGHTS OF SENIOR CITIZEN

In India, any person who has attained the age of 60 and above is legally termed as 'Senior Citizen'. Senior citizens are treasure troves of knowledge and experience and thus form a valuable and

integral part of the society (Policy Note 2024-25, Social Welfare and Women Empowerment Department, Government of Tamil Nadu, 2024).

In India, senior citizens are safeguarded under the Constitution, specifically by Article 41 in Part IV (Directive Principles of State Policy) and Article 21. Article 41 emphasizes the state's responsibility to provide the right to work, education, and public assistance within its economic capacity, particularly for individuals facing unemployment, old age, illness, disability, and other conditions of hardship: "The state shall, within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provisions for securing the right to work, to education and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement, and in other cases of undeserved want" (Rights of Senior Citizen, 2020).

In a landmark case, *Dr. Ashwani Kumar v. Union of India & Ors.* (Writ Petition [C] No. 193 of 2016), a petition was brought before the Supreme Court, highlighting the need for enhanced recognition and enforcement of fundamental rights for the elderly.

## SENIOR CITIZENS IN TAMIL NADU

The "Elderly in India, 2021" report, published by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI), Government of India, forecasts a significant rise in Tamil Nadu's elderly population. According to the report, the senior citizen population in Tamil Nadu has grown from 7.51 million in 2011 to 10.4 million in 2021, with projections estimating an increase to 14.2 million by 2031. This trend underscores the rapid pace of population aging in the region, highlighting the need for enhanced support systems and policy interventions to address the unique challenges faced by this growing demographic (Elderly in India 2021).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The growing concern over geriatric homicides in India has been widely documented in recent literature. The literatures on geriatric homicides offer critical insights into the various social,

economic and familial factors that contribute to the rise in geriatric homicides. These factors, as explored below, reveal the complex and interconnected nature of the problem.

Several factors contribute to the increasing number of geriatric homicides in India. One of the primary reasons is domestic violence, which remains a significant cause of elder abuse. The elderly, especially women, are particularly vulnerable to physical and emotional abuse by family members, often driven by financial stress and disputes over inheritance. Research by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (2020) underscores that economic dependency on children or relatives and the lack of social security contribute significantly to the abuse of elderly individuals, sometimes escalating to homicide.

Additionally, social isolation is another critical factor. As younger family members migrate for employment opportunities or reside in urban areas, elderly parents often find themselves isolated in rural or suburban settings. This isolation increases their dependency on those around them, heightening their risk of exploitation or harm (United Nations, 2021). Furthermore, health issues, including dementia and other cognitive impairments, may make elderly individuals more susceptible to violence and less able to defend themselves (National Institute on Aging, 2019).

## RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The Crime in India Report 2022 reveals that Tamil Nadu ranks highest in the nation for homicides involving senior citizens, with 201 reported cases, followed closely by Maharashtra with 198 cases and Madhya Pradesh with 129. This concerning trend forms the basis for this study, aimed at examining geriatric homicides in Tamil Nadu. Understanding the patterns, causes, and contributing factors behind these incidents is essential for developing targeted interventions to enhance the safety and well-being of elderly residents in the Tamil Nadu.

## METHODOLOGY

In this study, the case study method adopted follows the guidelines outlined by Robert Yin (2003), a renowned expert in case study research.

Yin's approach emphasizes a comprehensive, systematic examination of real-world cases within their specific context. The methodology aligns with the multiple-case study design, which involves analysing several cases across different locations and circumstances to draw comparisons and insights. This method is particularly valuable in addressing complex issues like geriatric homicides, where socio-environmental factors and policy implications play a significant role.

The study utilizes a multiple-case study approach. This approach involves the detailed investigation of a range of geriatric homicide cases in Tamil Nadu, focusing on cases reported in national newspapers. The selection of multiple cases allows for the identification of common patterns, systemic challenges, and variations across different instances. By analysing cases from different geographical locations and contexts within Tamil Nadu, this method enables the study to make comparisons and identify both local and broader trends.

The cases selected for this study are specifically bounded by the geographical region of Tamil Nadu, with a concentrated focus on the city of Chennai, as well as other districts within the state where geriatric homicides have been reported. The cases are also bound by the time frame of the past five years, ensuring the data is recent and relevant to current trends. The inclusion criteria for the cases were primarily based on reports of geriatric homicides published in national newspapers and documented in State Crime Records Bureau (SCRB) data.

## DATA COLLECTION

Data collection for this study was conducted through two primary sources:

1. **Statistical Data from SCRB:** Statistical data on geriatric homicides was sourced from the State Crime Records Bureau (SCRB) in Chennai. This data includes official crime reports, statistics, and trends related to geriatric homicides across Tamil Nadu.
2. **Case Studies from National Newspapers:** Specific case studies were extracted from articles published in various national newspapers. These case studies include detailed reports on individual homicide cases, victim profiles, and associated socio-criminal factors.

## ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

For ethical reasons, the names, caste, and religion of the deceased are omitted in this study. Case details reported in newspapers have been analyzed and presented as case studies, with no alterations or manipulations of the original facts.

## THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE ON GERIATRIC HOMICIDES

Various sociological theories explain about geriatric homicide and factors contributing to crimes against senior citizens. But the routine activity theory (RAT) applies to elder abuse by predicting that crimes occur when a motivated offender, suitable target, and lack of guardianship converge. Together, these frameworks offer a comprehensive understanding of elder abuse dynamics (Akers, 1999). Thus, RAT explains the contributing factors to geriatric homicide.

**Table 1: Overall Incidences of Crime against Senior Citizens in Tamil Nadu (2015 – 2022)**

S.N.	Type of Crime	No. of Victims
1.	Murder	1409
2.	Attempt to Murder	519
3.	Rape	35
4.	Molestation	21
5.	Dacoity	40
6.	Robbery	1297
7.	Grievous Hurt	175
8.	Extortion	125
9.	Cheating	1338
Total		4959

Source: State Crime Records Bureau (SCRB), Tamil Nadu

The above Table 1 illustrates the alarming rise in crimes targeting senior citizens; with geriatric homicides (murders) reaching approximately 1,409 reported incidents. Senior citizens are notably vulnerable to sexual assaults and sexual homicides (combined cases of rape and murder). Considered "soft targets" by fraudsters and scammers, Tamil Nadu alone recorded 1,338 cases of cheating involving senior citizens. Furthermore, due to the absence of capable guardianship, robbers often perceive senior citizens as suitable and accessible targets, with approximately 1,297 reported cases of robbery against them in Tamil Nadu.

## POLICIES GOVERNING SENIOR CITIZENS IN TAMIL NADU

To improve the quality of life for senior citizens, the state will ensure timely access to healthcare, nutrition, safety, security, financial stability, housing, and protection from abuse through collaborations across public and private sectors. A preventive, promotive, rehabilitative, and inclusive approach will be adopted to support sustainable development for seniors, guaranteeing freedom from discrimination based on region, gender, caste, class, religion, or disability.

Key focus areas of the Tamil Nadu State Policy for Senior Citizens, 2023: Health and Nutrition, Social Security Programs, Income and Livelihood Security, Housing and Environment, Safety and Security, Institutional Care, Awareness and Education, Research and Documentation, Disaster Management and Mitigation, Directorate for the Welfare of Senior Citizens. The Tamil Nadu State Policy for Senior Citizens is guided by the overarching goal of ensuring safety and security, with a strong emphasis on crime prevention to protect elderly citizens (Tamil Nadu State Policy on Senior Citizens – 2023).

## VARIOUS LAWS IN PROTECTING SENIOR CITIZENS

The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007

Salient features of the Act:

- This Act covers senior citizens as well as biological, adoptive, and step-parents. Senior citizens who are neglected or not supported by their children or legal heirs are entitled to file a petition with the Maintenance Tribunal, established under the Act at the revenue divisional level, to claim a maintenance allowance of up to Rs.10, 000 per month. Petitions for maintenance must be addressed and resolved within a period of 90 days.

- If an individual responsible for the care and protection of a senior citizen abandons them, they may face a penalty of imprisonment for up to three months, a fine of up to Rs. 5,000, or both.

- If a senior citizen, after the enactment of this Act on 31st December 2009, has transferred property to their children or legal heirs with the condition that the transferee will provide care, and the transferee fails to fulfill this obligation, the senior citizen or parent may file a petition to annul the gift deed (Policy Note 2024-25, Social Welfare and Women Empowerment Department, Government of Tamil Nadu, 2024).

## GERIATRIC HOMICIDES IN TAMIL NADU

**Table 2: Geriatric Homicides in Tamil Nadu**

S.N.	Years	No. of Geriatric Homicides
1	2015	162
2	2016	171
3	2017	185
4	2018	152
5	2019	173
6	2020	177
7	2021	191
8	2022	198
Total	1409	

Source: SCRB, Tamil Nadu

Table 2 highlights the incidence of geriatric homicides in Tamil Nadu from 2015 to 2022, revealing a concerning upward trend in the targeted killing of elderly individuals. Beginning with 162 cases in 2015, the numbers generally increased over the years, reaching a peak of 198 in 2022. Although there was a slight dip in 2018 (152 cases), the overall trajectory suggests a growing vulnerability of senior citizens to lethal violence. The total of 1,409 geriatric homicides over eight years reflects both a pressing public safety issue and potential socio-economic or familial neglect faced by the elderly. This trend calls for a deeper examination of the motives behind such crimes—whether rooted in property disputes, isolation, or abuse—and the urgent need for policy measures to ensure the protection and well-being of the aging population in Tamil Nadu.

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## Why they are Consider as Soft Targets

**Table 3: Reasons for the Homicides in Tamil Nadu 2019 to 2021**

S.N	Reason	2019	2020	2021
1	Family Quarrel	430	357	379
2	Wordy Quarrel	320	322	337
3	Previous Enmity	275	312	220
4	Love Affairs/Sexual Causes	251	229	220
5	Money Transaction	72	55	59
6	Land Dispute	118	123	115
7	Drunken Brawls	67	68	109
8	Dowry Harassment	3	5	4
9	Political Reasons	3	4	1
10	Other Causes	131	118	143
11	Casteism	8	4	9
	Total	1678	1597	1597

Source: SCRB, Tamil Nadu

Generally, senior citizens frequently face health challenges such as insomnia and arthritis, which, combined with increased dependency on others, make them susceptible targets for criminals. Many elderly individuals, including couples and widowers, live alone, and without the presence of capable guardians, they become one of the most vulnerable segments of society.

Table 3 highlights that the majority of geriatric homicides stem from various motives, including property disputes, family conflicts, drunken altercations, political issues, verbal arguments, sexual motives, financial reasons, and murders driven by personal gain.

Welfare Schemes and Protective Measures for Senior Citizens in Tamil Nadu

- Government of Tamil Nadu is committed to the welfare of the elderly. Tamil Nadu is the pioneer state which gave pension to the senior citizens (OAP).
- A sum of Rs.6.62 Crore has been provided in the Budget Estimate for the year 2024-2025 for the welfare of senior citizens in Tamil Nadu by Ministry of Social Welfare and Women Empowerment
- Under Section 7 of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007, the Government has designated Revenue Divisional Officers (RDOs) as Maintenance Tribunals to adjudicate, resolve, and issue orders regarding maintenance applications as per Section 5 of the Act. There are currently 94 such tribunals operating across the State, and these tribunals are endowed with the powers of a Civil Court.
- The District Social Welfare Officer (DSWO) is designated as the Conciliation and Maintenance Officer under this Act. In cases where an aggrieved senior citizen and the opposing party agree to a settlement, the tribunal will refer the matter to the DSWO or another mutually agreed-upon individual. The relevant documents will be forwarded to facilitate a resolution acceptable to both parties within 30 days.
- The State Government has appointed the District Collector as the Appellate Tribunal to hear appeals against the decisions made by the Maintenance Tribunal. An appeal may be filed by the appellant within 60 days of the tribunal's order.
- The government has established a High-Level Advisory Committee called the State Council for Senior Citizens, chaired by the Chief Secretary at the state level, and a District Committee led by the District Collector of each district, to ensure the effective implementation of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007.
- To protect the welfare of elderly individuals over 60 years old who have been abandoned by their families, the State Government provides maintenance grants to old age homes operated by NGOs, with a funding partnership of 5:1 between the State and the NGOs. These homes offer food, shelter, clothing, healthcare, recreational activities, and expenses for final rites. Each home can

accommodate up to 40 residents, with a feeding grant of Rs. 1,200 per person per month. In the financial year 2023-2024, 812 elders benefited from 23 such homes.

- The Union Government, based on recommendations from the State Government, provides grants directly to NGOs for the operation of 66 old age homes, 1 continuous care home, physiotherapy clinics, 3 Mobile Medicare Units, and 1 Regional Resource Training Centre. The grants are allocated at a 90:10 ratio between the Union and State Governments.

- The Senior Citizen Helpline (14567), operational since April 28, 2021, provides support from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily. The helpline offers the following services:

- Rescue assistance
- Information on old age homes
- Details on senior citizen welfare schemes
- Psycho-social counseling
- Legal guidance related to the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007

From May 17, 2021, to March 2024, the helpline received approximately 177,826 calls (Policy Note 2024-25, Social Welfare and Women Empowerment Department, Government of Tamil Nadu, 2024).

## CASE STUDIES

### ***CASE 1: MURDER FOR FAMILY QUARREL***

The incident occurred in Ernavoor, a locality in Chennai, in August 2024. According to police sources, the 65-year-old father had a quarrel with his wife, which escalated when he forcefully pushed her out of the house. In retaliation to his father's actions, the son became enraged and a violent confrontation ensued. During the altercation, the son struck his father on the head with a plunger, inflicting severe injuries that led to his father's collapse and subsequent death. The Ennore police have registered the case and taken the son into custody. The deceased is survived by his wife, three daughters, and the son who has been arrested for the crime (DTNext Bureau, 2024).

### ***CASE 2: MURDER FOR PROPERTY DISPUTE***

The Greater Chennai Police apprehended a man on charges of murdering his octogenarian mother in Porur, Chennai, in November 2022. According to police officials, the tragic incident stemmed from a heated dispute over property between the son and his mother. The argument escalated into violence when the son repeatedly stabbed his mother with a knife. The Maduravayol police station has registered the case and arrested the son. It was revealed that the son, burdened by mounting debts and having recently lost his job, had pressured his mother to transfer a property into his name. When she refused, he resorted to murder in a fit of rage (Express Web Desk, 2022).

### ***CASE 3: MURDER FOR SEXUAL PLEASURE***

An elderly woman, aged 80, was found murdered in her home in Vysarpadi, Chennai. The victim, a widow, lived alone, managing her household with the rent income from her property. She is survived by her daughter, who resides in Madhavaram. According to police sources, the woman sustained head injuries, and the perpetrator, a known history-sheeter, allegedly entered her home while intoxicated with the intent to sexually assault her. When the victim attempted to resist and raised her voice, the accused brutally struck her with a stick, leading to her death. The MKB Nagar police station has registered a case of murder and arrested the accused (DTNext Bureau, 2024).

### ***CASE 4: MURDER FOR GAIN***

A 95-year-old senior citizen was tragically murdered in her home in Tiruchirappalli in June 2024. The victim, a widow living alone after her husband's death, relied on rental income from two properties she owned in the area. Authorities report that an unidentified assailant entered her home, forcibly stole her gold chain and ear studs, and then strangled her to death. The Thiruvaramangam police station has registered a murder case and initiated an investigation to apprehend the perpetrator. This incident underscores the vulnerabilities of elderly individuals living alone and highlights the urgent need for enhanced protection for senior citizens (DTNext Bureau, 2024).

### **CASE 5: MURDER FOR MONETARY DISPUTE**

A 35-year-old man was arrested in August 2024 in connection with the brutal murder of a 71-year-old woman from Virudhunagar, whose charred remains were found near Salaiputhur in Thoothukudi district. The victim had been missing for several weeks, and subsequent police investigations revealed that her death was the result of a financial dispute. The woman owed money to the accused, who, after her refusal to repay, lured her into a car under the pretense of resolving the issue. Once inside, the accused attacked her with an iron rod, killing her before setting her body on fire to cover up the crime. This incident underscores the extreme actions driven by financial conflicts, emphasizing the need for effective dispute resolution and improved safety measures for vulnerable individuals (Tnn, 2024).

### **CASE 6: MURDER FOR FINANCIAL GAIN**

A 70-year-old woman was found murdered in her residence in Kalapakkam, Chengalpattu district, in September 2024. The victim, who had been living alone since the death of her husband—a retired employee of the Indira Gandhi Atomic Research Centre in Kalapakkam two years earlier—was discovered with her throat slit and two sovereigns of gold jewellery missing. Despite having five married children living separately, she supported herself by running a small eatery. The Sadhuranagpattinam police have registered a murder case, and investigations are ongoing to locate the perpetrator responsible for this heinous crime. This tragic incident highlights the vulnerability of elderly individuals living alone and the growing need for enhanced safety measures for senior citizens (Tnn, 2024).

### **CASE 7: MURDER FOR SEXUAL CAUSE**

In 2016, an 83-year-old woman from Gandhipuram, Coimbatore, was brutally robbed, sexually assaulted, and murdered. The elderly victim, who lived alone, received daily visits from her grandson, who would bring her breakfast each morning. During the police investigation, it was determined that she had been strangled with what appeared to be a shawl, and her two gold bangles

were also reported missing. The autopsy report further revealed that she was sexually assaulted before her murder. Despite ongoing efforts, the accused has yet to be apprehended. This case highlights the grave vulnerabilities faced by senior citizens living alone and underscores the urgent need for heightened protective measures for the elderly (Madhav, 2016).

### **CASE 8: MURDER OF A POLITICAL PERSONALITY**

The charred remains of a political leader were discovered at his farm in Tirunelveli in May 2024, following his disappearance on the evening of May 2nd around 7 p.m. His son filed a complaint with the Uvari police station, triggering an investigation. Police reports revealed that the victim's body was found bound with steel wire commonly used for fencing. Forensic experts who conducted the autopsy concluded that the death was not a case of self-immolation but rather a murder, indicating that the victim was killed before being set on fire. The Crime Branch – Central Investigation Department (CB-CID) is handling the investigation, but as of now, the case remains unresolved. This incident underscores the challenges in criminal investigations, especially when involving political figures, and the possibility of foul play (Tamilarasu, 2024).

### **CASE 9: MURDER FOR ROBBERY**

An octogenarian couple, aged 85 and 80, were discovered murdered with severe hacking injuries at their residence near Chennimalai in September 2023. The couple, who lived alone, are survived by three married daughters residing in different districts. Police investigations revealed that unidentified intruders had broken into their home, stealing approximately 10 sovereigns of gold jewellery along with other valuables. Notably, the couple's pet dog had died under suspicious circumstances a week before the murder, prompting suspicions that the intruders may have previously attempted entry and possibly poisoned the dog to prevent interference. Chennimalai police have registered a case, and further inquiries are ongoing. This tragic incident highlights the vulnerability of elderly individuals living alone and the extreme tactics employed by criminals in targeting senior citizens (Tnn, 2023).

## CASE 10: MURDER DUE TO ANGER

A young man was arrested in Tamil Nadu's Thoothukudi district for the alleged murder of a 65-year-old man, an incident that occurred in January 2022. The Sawyerpuram police registered the case after initial reports indicated that the suspect, while

searching for his lost cattle, approached the victim to request his mobile phone for a call. Further investigation is ongoing to clarify the full circumstances of this tragic event. This case underscores underlying tensions and the potential for violence in rural interactions, highlighting concerns around resource sharing and rural crime (Ananth, 2022).

## CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

S.N.	Year	Age in years	Gender	District	Reason for Geriatric Homicide	Modus Operandi of Geriatric Homicide	Police Station
1.	2024	65	Male	Chennai	Family quarrel	Used plunger for homicide	Ennore PS
2.	2022	83	Female	Chennai	Property dispute	Used knife for homicide	Maduravayol PS
3.	2024	80	Female	Chennai	Sexual cause	Used stick for homicide	MKB Nagar PS
4.	2024	95	Female	Tiruchirappalli	Robbery (Murder for gain)	Used a shawl to commit homicide by strangulation.	Thiruvaramangalam PS
5.	2024	71	Female	Thoothukudi	Monetary dispute	Used iron rod for homicide and burned	Salaiputhur PS
6.	2024	70	Female	Chengalpattu	Robbery (Murder for gain)	Used knife for homicide	Sadhurangapattinam PS
7.	2016	83	Female	Coimbatore	Sexual assault (Rape)	Used a shawl to commit homicide by strangulation.	Gandhipuram PS
8.	2024	60	Male	Tirunelveli	Political personality (Reason unknown)	Killed and burned	Uvari PS and later changed to CB-CID
9.	2023	80 and 85	Female and Male	Erode	Robbery (Murder for gain)	Double murder (couple) -modus operandi unknown	Chennimalai PS
10.	2023	65	Male	Thoothukudi	Wordy quarrel	Beaten to death	Sawyerpuram PS

A total of 10 cases were selected from the period between 2016 and 2024. Among these, around 50% of the victims of geriatric homicides were octogenarians. Three victims were in the age group of 65, 70, and 71 and in only case, the victim was 60 years old.

Out of 10 case studies, three were reported from Chennai, two from Thoothukudi and rest of the cases were from other districts across Tamil Nadu, with one case each.

The motives behind the homicides varied: two cases driven by family and personal conflicts, two were related to sexual assault, two were due to monetary disputes, one was politically motivated

and another resulted from anger, leading to murder. The remaining cases were motivated by financial gain. Most of the victims were above the age of 65. In the majority of cases, the accused were arrested, although a few cases remain unsolved.



Case study analysis reveals that women are disproportionately targeted in geriatric homicides compared to men. Widowed women living alone are especially vulnerable to robberies, highlighting gaps in community support and inadequate neighborhood and community policing for senior citizens' protection. Some of these homicides are marked by extreme brutality and disturbing motives, as elderly women are occasionally targeted for sexual reasons, with two cases in the study involving rape and murder. Additionally, property disputes and familial conflicts contribute to a significant number of geriatric homicides within family settings.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Senior citizens face increasing neglect in society, with a significant number of geriatric homicide victims in Tamil Nadu living alone without guardians or adequate safety measures. Although national and state policies for senior citizens address areas such as health, nutrition, and pensions, a critical gap remains in terms of a crime prevention model specifically designed for the elderly. While the Government of India recognizes exemplary senior citizens and geriatric care institutions through awards, many advanced states still lack a dedicated wing within their police departments to ensure the safety and well-being of senior citizens.

The Ministry of Home Affairs has formulated a standard operating procedure aimed at safeguarding property and protecting senior citizens across India; however, crime prevention falls under the jurisdiction of individual states, leading to inconsistencies in implementation. As the state with the second-largest senior citizen population in India, Tamil Nadu should consider adopting best practices from countries like Japan, Norway, and Denmark, where robust systems are in place to protect the elderly. This approach could help create a secure and crime-free environment for Tamil Nadu's aging population, addressing the unique vulnerabilities faced by senior citizens.

## CONCLUSION

Tamil Nadu's challenge of geriatric homicide calls for urgent and strategic action from the Tamil Nadu Police and policymakers to ensure the safety of its elderly population. Tamil Nadu Police have launched an initiative titled "Bandham," designed to provide assistance and support for those aged 75 and above; however, this program is currently limited to the Chennai Metropolitan area.

Various literature reveal social, economic and familial dynamics significantly contribute to the rise in geriatric homicides in India and these factors are also noticed in state of Tamil Nadu. These factors intertwined with cultural expectations and changing societal structures, can increase the risks faced by the elderly.

From a theoretical standpoint, the Routine Activity Theory (RAT) offers a valuable framework to understand the rising threat to the elderly population. According to RAT, crime occurs when three elements converge: a motivated offender, a suitable target, and a lack of capable guardianship. In the case of geriatric homicides, elderly individuals often become suitable targets due to their physical vulnerability, social isolation, and dependency on others. In many instances, the elderly lack capable guardianship, particularly when family members or caregivers may be unavailable or neglectful.

Literature and policy-making play crucial roles in shaping both the public and governmental action on this issue. To effectively address the rising concern of geriatric homicides, the Tamil Nadu Police should take proactive measures to identify neighborhoods with high elderly populations and map areas most vulnerable to geriatric homicides. Establishing and implementing specific standard operating procedures (SOPs) tailored to mitigate the risks faced by senior citizens would be a vital step toward enhancing their protection. By strategically assessing and targeting crime-prone hotspots, Tamil Nadu can work towards creating a safer environment for its aging population, minimizing the risk of crime against one of its most vulnerable communities.

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