

Elderly Paprents: Caregiving Challenges Of Sandwich Generation- A Study In Sivasagar District

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Abstract:

Sandwich generation is a generation of people typically in their thirties to fifties, responsible for both bringing up their own growing children and taking care of their own ageing parents which, it creates some challenges to the sandwich generation. There are many aspects like physical, financial, and emotional and time causes challenges to the sandwich generation. These challenges will be doubled in case of working couples. Working couples are again sandwiched between the needs of children, parents and workplaces. One hundred numbers of respondents have been selected from Sivasagar district of Assam by adopting stratified random sampling techniques. The majority of responders, according to the report, are in their middle years (40 to 50). Majority of respondents had completed upper secondary levels. The research indicates that the sandwich generation's major issues are emotional ones. The sandwich generation is burdened with a lot of work, including taking care of their ageing parents on top of their jobs, careers, and children. Caretakers must regularly chat with their parents for their mental well-being, schedule some leisure activities with them to keep them happy, and perform other things in order to keep their parents happy. Both sandwich generation workers and non-workers may experience emotional imbalance and mental stress as a result of these difficulties. The findings indicated that the physical, financial, and emotional issues faced by the sandwich generation are severe. Time factors were not statistically substantially changed by any of the variables, however. The findings revealed considerable differences between working and non-working women in terms of time, money, and physical characteristics. The emotional features of working and non-working women did not significantly differ. The Sandwich Generation is not a recent phenomenon, but it has received little attention. With an ageing population, there is a greater need for Sandwich Generation caregivers to be aware of available options.

Keywords: Sandwich generation, Elderly parents, Challenges, Factors

Introduction:

The sandwich generation is made up of people who are typically in their thirties to fifties and who are responsible for both raising their own growing children and caring for their own ageing parents. (This study has selected age group between 30-50 years because between this age group majority of people bring up their own growing child and taking care of their parents). There are many aspects like physical, financial, and emotional and time causes challenges to the sandwich generation. These challenges will be doubled in case of working couples. Working couples are again sandwiched between the needs of children, parents and workplaces. They faced lots of challenges at working place as well as in family also. Addressing the needs of these individuals and roles of caregiver has been found to be stressful (Hammer and Neal, 2008). Adult children have moral responsibility towards their elderly parents. Moreover, the development and maintenance of friendships, as well as feelings of loneliness brought on by social anxiety, are all indirectly impacted by connection to parents (Bhattacharjee and Laldinpuii, 2023). It is an ethical principle for adult children to provide care to elderly parents. One of the biggest responsibilities of a caregiver is to assist the older person with personal care. Elderly parents need emotional support from their adult children to feel secured (Dhar, 2012). Adult children must give financial support to their parents if required and demand some quality time (Bhattacharjee, et al.,

2022). In the present scenario of double income family and increasing demand on caregiver makes the care giving task more challenging.

Sandwich generation refers to people who are caught between the competing duties of caring for at least one dependent child and one or more elderly parents. Sandwich generation family caregivers face a variety of challenges on a daily basis –

- Taking care of their own. It's easy for family caregivers to neglect their own needs while caring for everyone else.
- Managing a full-time job is a challenging task.
- Financial problems.

The term "sandwich generation" now appears in various dictionaries, a slew of government and media stories, and a slew of scholarly papers, and has entered our common vernacular. The term "family caregiver" refers to unpaid family and friends who support a person who requires assistance with daily activities. As our population becomes older and people live longer with chronic illnesses, the person getting assistance is more likely to be an older adult. Income and race/ethnicity may have an impact on the additional stress of caring for both children and elderly relatives (Elizabeth et al., 2014).

Purpose of the study:

The sandwich generation is so named because they are effectively "sandwiched" between the responsibility of caring for their ageing parents who may be ill, unable to perform various tasks, or in need of financial support and the responsibility of caring for their children, who require financial, physical, and emotional support. The sandwich generation is susceptible to a variety of pressures, including: Burnout, guilt, and loneliness are all symptoms of caregiver burnout. Finding time to be a good spouse, parent, and child all at the same time is a challenge. Work, hobbies, relationships, and personal time are all difficult to balance. The main purpose of the study is that to find out the various challenges faced by the sandwich generation while care giving to elderly parents (challenges like physical, emotional, financial and time) and to know how they can handle these challenges. And also, we try to find out that what are the different types of factors affecting their daily life and what are the differences between daily life challenges of working and non-working sandwich generation women.

Objectives:

- To assess the challenges faced by the sandwich generation.
- To identify the specific issues faced by this generation
- To find out the differences of challenges between working and non-working women.

Methodology:

To conduct the study, four stage sampling design has been adopted. Sivasagar district of Assam was selected by convenient sampling under non probability sampling method for the current study. There are 5 developmental blocks in Sivasagar district. These are Demow, Nazira, Mahmora, Sivasagar and Amguri. For this study, urban area of all the blocks were selected purposively. As the study was concern about the working women and non-working woman from sandwich generation, that were dwelling with their elderly parents and children, which was difficult to find out, so urban areas of all the blocks were targeted.

Under urban area of each block one bank and one hospital were selected purposively for working women from sandwich generation. Thus, a total of 5 banks and 5 hospitals were selected from 5 blocks. And non-working sandwich woman were selected using stratified random sampling from 14 municipal wards in Sivasagar. A total sample of 100, where 50 working sandwich generation women were selected by adopting purposive random sampling from the urban area (from banks and hospitals) and 50 non-working sandwich generation women were selected by using stratified random sampling from urban area to bring homogeneity in sample selection.

A check list to find out sandwich generation women, which have their own children and elderly parents staying together has been prepared. The prepared checklist consisted of statements relating to age of the respondent, age of the children and age of the elderly parents. On the basis of the responses obtained from the check list sandwich generation groups were categorised. The data were collected with the help of an interview schedule. The interview schedule was prepared keeping in mind the objectives of the study. The schedule consisted of four parts. Part I of the interview schedule consist of questions regarding the socio-economic profile of the individual such as age, marital status, educational qualification, type of family, household income, involvement in income generating activities, etc of the beneficiaries and their household. Part II of the interview schedule dealt with the information related to extent of challenges face by sandwich generation care giving to elderly parents. Part III of the interview schedule dealt with the information related to factors

affecting sandwich generation care giving. Part IV of the interview schedule dealt with the information related to difference of challenges between the working and non- working women from sandwich generation.

The reliability and validity of the self-constructed scale has been determined by a pilot study and with the help of a panel of judges. To test the reliability of the scale in socio cultural context of Sivasagar district of Assam, a pilot study was conducted on 30 non-sample respondents of working sandwich generation employee from Shankardev Vidya Niketon, a co-educational high school of Sivasagar and 30 non-sample respondents of non-working sandwich generation women from Gaon panchayat, Amguri. Data were collected, tabulated, calculated by using IBM-SPSS software and tested statistically by Cronbach's alpha reliability test (.718). For testing content validity, the self-constructed scale has been given to a panel of judges consisting of 6 members from different disciplines for their views. The judges were requested to give their comment against each item whether it was "Relevant", "Ambiguous" or "Not relevant" to the researchable subject. Required modifications of the items were done as suggested by the judges. After the collection of data, raw data were categorized and coded for tabulation and statistical computation. Bar graphs and pie diagram was used to present some of the research data. Statistical techniques of confirmatory factor analysis, independent t-test were applied to identify the specific issues and find out of different types of challenges they faced.

The key findings and discussion:

1. Demographic characteristics of the respondents:

1.1 Age of the beneficiaries: It was found that 43 percent of the respondents belonged to the age group between 40 to 45years which is the highest. This may be due to the fact that majority of sandwich generation people belonging to this age group are generally responsible for both bringing up their own growing adolescents children and taking care of their own ageing parents (Bhattacharjee et al., 2022). Followed by 23 percent belonged to the age group between 45 to 50, 18 percent belonged to the age group between 35 to 40 years and 16 percent belonged to the age group between 30 to 35 years.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents as per their age group:

Age group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
30 to 35	16	16
35 to 40	18	18
40 to 45	43	43
45 to 50	23	23
TOTAL	100	100

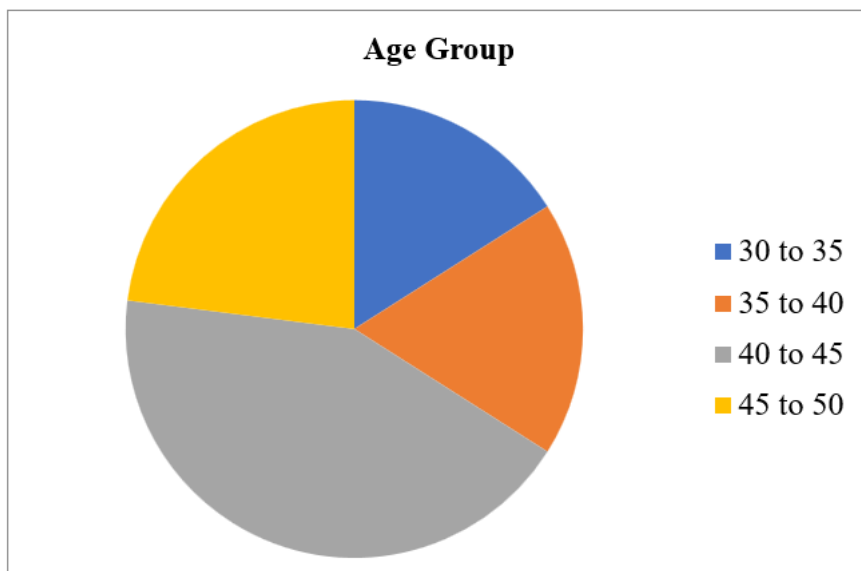


Fig. 1 Age of the respondents

1.2 Educational qualification of the beneficiaries: Educational qualification of the beneficiaries revealed that all the respondents are literate among targeted population. It was found that highest percentage of beneficiaries i.e.,45 per cent

beneficiaries completed higher secondary level followed by 40 per cent completed high school level i.e., HSLC and 15 percent beneficiaries studied up to Graduation and above.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents as per their educational qualification

Educational qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
H.S.L.C. Passed	40	40
Higher Secondary passed	45	45
Graduate and above	15	15
Total	100	100

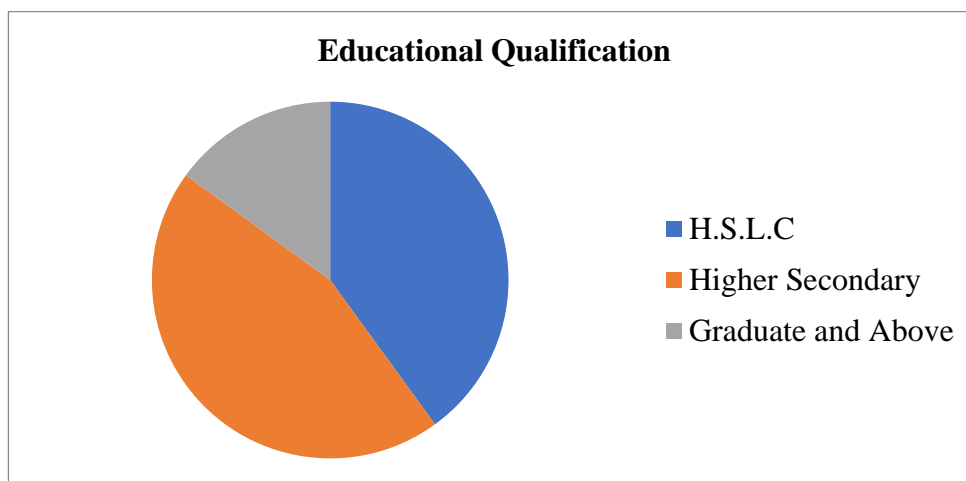


Fig. 2 Educational qualification

1.3 Occupation of beneficiaries: It was found that 50 per cent of the beneficiaries belonged to service family which was the highest. This may be due to the reason that 50 per cent of the respondents were from working class of sandwich generation. Followed by 21 per cent belonged to any others, 15 per cent belonged to only cultivation and other 14 percent beneficiaries belongs to business family.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents as per their Occupation:

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Service	50	50
Business	14	14
Only cultivation	15	15
Any others	21	21
Total	100	100

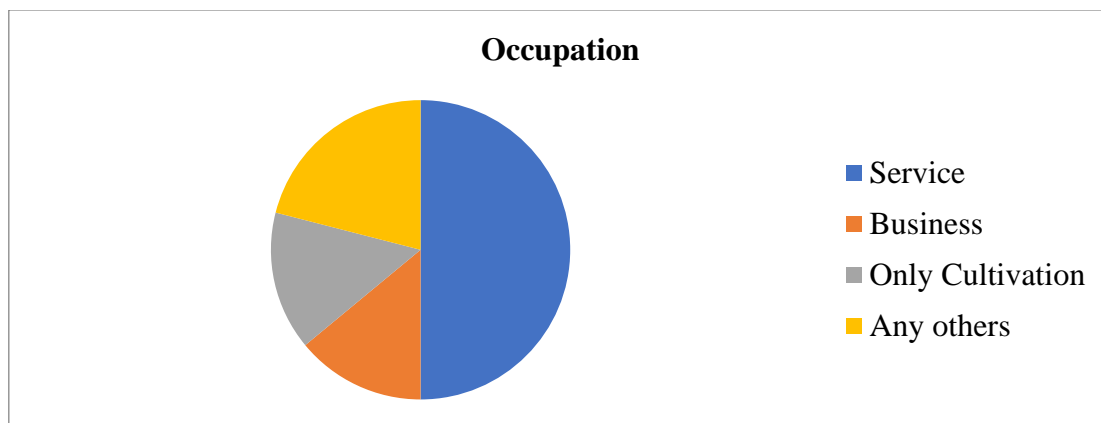


Fig. 3 Occupation of the respondents

1.4 Annual income of the family of the beneficiary: It was observed that 52 percent of the beneficiaries have an annual household income within the range of 1 lakh to 5 lakh. It may be due to the fact that 50 percent of the sandwich generation people were employed in government and private sectors. Beneficiaries having annual household income above 5 lakh were 39 percent followed by 9 percent beneficiaries are having the household less than 1 lakh.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents as per total annual income of the family

Annual income	Frequency	Percentage
Less Than 1 lakh	9	9
Between 1 lakh to 5 lakh	52	52
Above 5 lakh	39	39
Total	100	100

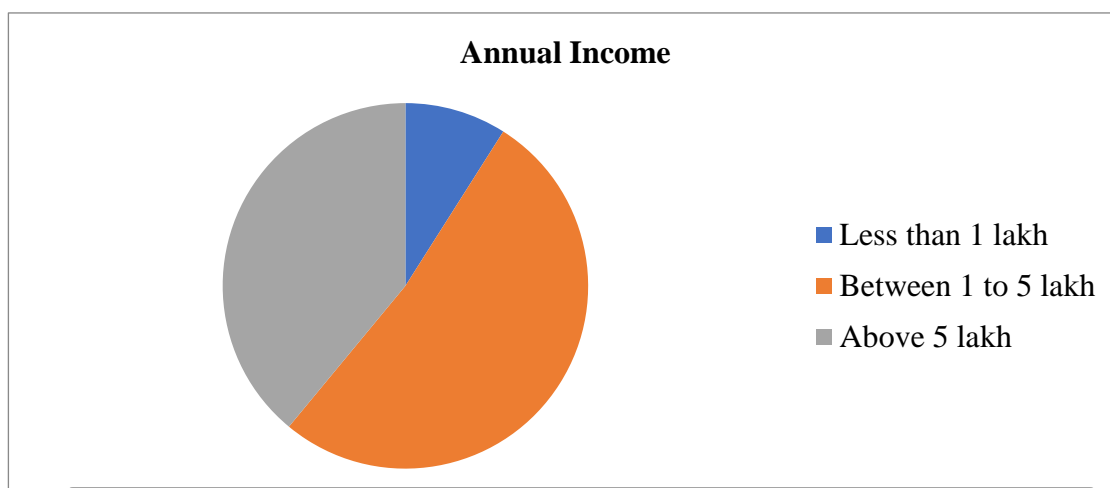


Fig. 4 Annual income of the respondents

2. To identify the specific issues faced by this generation

To assess the challenges faced by the sandwich generation (Table 5) results indicated that, highest challenges faced by sandwich generation were emotional challenges with mean value of 24.79. Hence, rank 1 has been given to emotional challenges, followed by time, financial and physical with rank 2, rank 3 and rank 4 respectively on the basis of mean score. It may be due to the fact that women belonging to Sandwich generation have to manage time, financial problems and health issues and at the same time they have to take care of elderly parents, their children (Abdullah et al., 2008). In case of working women again added by work pressure. Sandwich generation people have lots of work, related to elderly parents along with their job responsibilities and taking care of their children. To make their parents cheerful, frequent conversation with them for parents’ mental satisfaction, plan some recreational activities with parents to keep them

happy etc are to be included in daily routine of care giver, so these types of challenges may create emotional unbalance and mental stress to both working and non-working people from sandwich generation (Boyczuk, and Fletcher, 2016). According to research findings, lowest rank for challenges faced by sandwich generation was physical challenges which might be due to the reason that providing healthier food timely, regular medical check-up, provide medicine on time; maintain hygiene were not so big deal for them. According to the personal conversations with those who work, they have tried to manage their time, but if that isn't possible, they have found a caregiver to take care of their parent's physical needs on a regular basis.

Table 5: Mean and Standard Deviation of challenges faced by the Sandwich Generation:

Aspects	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Physical	100	20.44	2.95529
Financial	100	21.00	4.05019
Emotional	100	24.79	1.95037
Time	100	22.52	3.24265

Table 6: Ranking of challenges faced by Sandwich Generation:

Characteristics	N	Mean	Ranking
Physical	100	20.44	Rank 4
Financial	100	21.00	Rank 3
Emotional	100	24.79	Rank 1
Time	100	22.52	Rank 2

3. To identify the specific issues faced by this generation

To identify the specific issues faced by this generation (Table 7) results revealed that, under the physical factors major issues faced by the sandwich generation were to provide healthier food on time, maintain self-hygiene, help parents to get dressed, medicine on time and help parents to take bath. It may be due to the fact that non-working women have to do these types of work on regular basis but for working women, this was a challenge to manage time and sometimes they have to manage care-taker for taking care of their physical need of parent on regular basis (Burke, and Calvano, 2017).

Under the financial factors major issues faced by the sandwich generation were to keep separate amount of money for caring parents, take loan to meet financial crisis, insufficient income, money management, medical expenses and family health insurance. It may be due to the fact that non-working women did not have enough income sources to keep separate amount of money for caring parents. So, they have to take loan to meet financial crisis. At the same time, working sandwich generation women also faced these types of crisis little bit but they have tried to manage to keep an amount of money safely for parents' caretaking.

Under the emotional factors only major issue faced by the sandwich generation was consider parents point of views. This may be due to the fact that people point of view changes when time changing. Sandwich generation people have to deal with their parents' point of views; these difficulties may cause emotional instability and mental stress in both sandwich generation workers and non-workers. From the table 7(a) results revealed that, time factors did not have any major issues. It may be due to the fact that, for non-working women time factors were not so big deal for them. At the same time, working women have tried to manage time, but if not possible, they managed a caretaker for taking care of their parents on regular basis.

Table 7: Confirmatory factor analysis:

Factor	Indicator	Estimate	SE	Z	p
Physical	Provide healthier food	0.50282	0.06885	7.3026	< .001
	Medical check up	0.03342	0.05066	0.6596	0.509
	Self-hygiene	0.19652	0.05460	3.5994	< .001
	Get dressed	0.45634	0.12193	3.7428	< .001
	Medicine on time	0.55961	0.06105	9.1672	< .001
	Take bath	0.38611	0.10670	3.6186	< .001
Financial	Money for caring parents	0.46230	0.06000	7.7054	< .001

Table 7: Confirmatory factor analysis:

Factor	Indicator	Estimate	SE	Z	p
	Take loan	0.88980	0.11223	7.9283	< .001
	Insufficient income	0.95139	0.07924	12.0068	< .001
	Money management	1.16274	0.08786	13.2348	< .001
	Medical expenses	1.26782	0.09059	13.9947	< .001
	family health insurance	0.91718	0.09075	10.1062	< .001
Emotional	Parents cheerful	0.00224	0.01994	0.1123	0.911
	Share ideas	0.00485	0.04154	0.1168	0.907
	Plan recreational activities	2.50e-4	0.00376	-0.0666	0.947
	Frequent conversation	0.00721	0.06116	-0.1179	0.906
	Consider parents point of views	0.57239	0.10589	6.0123	<.018
	Decision making process	0.00771	0.06554	-0.1177	0.906

Table 7(a): Confirmatory factor analysis

Factor	Variables	P
Time	Quality time to parents	Non-significant
	Can't give full time in office	Non-significant
	Listening needs and interest	Non-significant
	Parents outing	Non-significant
	Can't complete daily works	Non-significant
	Parents essential daily tasks	Non-significant

4. To find out the differences of challenges between working and non-working women.

To find out the differences of challenges between working and non-working women (Table 8) findings revealed that there exist certain differences in the challenges faced by the working and non-working sandwich generation women on the basis of main four factors physical, financial, emotional and time. Here, results revealed that Physical, Financial and Time, there is a significant difference between working and non-working women. Non-working sandwich generation women did not have problem with care-giving to elderly parents physically. This finding may be due to the reason that they had acquired the ability how to manage care giving to elderly parents physically like bath, provide healthier food on time, hygiene, medical check-up, provide medicine on time etc.

The personal conversations with those who work revealed that they have tried to manage their time but, if necessary, they have hired a caregiver to attend to their parents' physical needs on a daily basis. Financial factors also have significant differences between working and non-working women. Non-working sandwich generation women did not have enough financial support than working women. They had faced lots of financial related problems like not having family health insurance, parents' medical expenses, take loan to financial crisis, insufficient income to run family etc. At the same time working sandwich generation women generally not faced these type of challenges. They had sufficient money to run a family.

Results also indicate that time factors have significant differences between working and non-working women. Non-working sandwich generation women had enough quality time to their elderly parents, to listening their needs and interests, parents' essential daily tasks and parents outing. But working women did not have enough time to give full time to their care giving, listening to their needs and interests etc. Studies revealed that to assist family members with one or more activities of daily living activities such as clothing, bathing, toileting, managing a household, or dealing with finances working women often face problem in terms of managing their time (Tebes & Irish, 2000). These issues have a significant impact on middle-aged persons' whole lifestyle, including personal time, professional development, and financial security.

According to Cattanach and Tebes (1991), with increasing stress and demands, family caregivers are at risk for a variety of mental health issues, including depression and anxiety. Tebes & Irish, (2000) identified women who cared for an elderly relative while also parenting a child at home as one type of caregivers who would be vulnerable to such issues. Middle-aged adults are typically at the pinnacle of their professions and have a lot on their plates at work. Results revealed that emotional factor has no significant difference between working and non-working women. It may be due to

the fact that women from the Sandwich Generation are managing caring for their children, ageing parents, and managing their time, money, and health challenges. Workplace pressure is another factor for working women. People of the sandwich generation are very busy with their jobs, caring for their children, and taking care of their ageing parents.

Table 8: Independent t-test:

	Working and Non-Working	N	t value	Df.	Sig. value	Remarks
Physical	Working	50	-9.719	98	.000	P<0.05
	Non-Working	50	-9.719	76.023	.000	
Financial	Working	50	24.670	98	.000	P<0.05
	Non-Working	50	24.670	74.642	.000	
Emotional	Working	50	-.974	98	.332	p>0.05
	Non-Working	50	-.974	94.571	.333	
Time	Working	50	12.382	98	.000	P<0.05
	Non-Working	50	12.382	96.540	.000	

Conclusion

According to the findings, emotional challenges are the biggest problems facing the sandwich generation. People in the sandwich generation have a lot of labour to do, including caring for their ageing parents as well as their jobs, careers, and children. To keep their parents happy, caretakers must regularly converse with them for their mental satisfaction, plan some recreational activities with them to keep them content, and other tasks. These challenges may lead to emotional imbalance and mental stress in sandwich generation workers and non-workers alike. Results showed that working and non-working women differ significantly in terms of time, money, and physical attributes. There were no appreciable differences in emotional characteristics between working and non-working women.

Recommendation:

1. The study can be carried out in other districts of Assam, to get more relevant data regarding sandwich generation caregiving challenges to their elderly parents.
2. The study can be carried out on a wider scale with a large sample size.
3. More variables can be included for the study.

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