STUDIO APARTMENTS

Implications on the social and faculty structures

by

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ABSTRACT

Needs of elderly persons are gaining recognition in this younger-generation-oriented society of Singapore. This awareness is attributed to both the Government’s efforts in highlighting the effects brought about by the ageing population and the awareness of the elderly persons’ rights. To prepare for the greying society, the housing provision and the design of the built environment needs to be modified.

In an attempt to cater to these needs, the Housing and Development Board (HDB) launched a new programme, the Studio Apartment (SA) Scheme, in March 1998. The scheme provides opportunities for the elderly persons to live independently and yet remain at close proximity to their children. With the “elderly-friendly” fixtures attached, the elder residents expressed their welcome to the SAs by responding well to the first pilot scheme. The Government has even expressed intention to introduce the scheme to every electoral division. With over 86 per cent of the population residing in HDB flats, this introduction will have a significant effect on the total
wellbeing of the elderly persons. Thus, the paper aims to investigate if the SA Scheme is the solution to providing public housing to the elderly persons in Singapore.

The hypothesis is examined with references to the role of HDB, past public housing programmes, the needs and concerns of the elderly persons and the future of the SA Scheme in Singapore. With preference for independence and family facing constraints, the Government is under pressure to assume a more prominent position. However, it aims only to provide the infrastructure and not to replace the role of the family or the individual. With experiences and skills gained from past projects, the SA Scheme is in a better position to provide housing for the elderly persons. Nevertheless, it still fails to take into consideration certain aspects that are important to successful ageing. Priorities of the elderly persons and the Government are also changing. The SA Scheme is only one of the more successful solution that caters to the needs of the elderly persons. It would not be the only and the definite solution to housing the elderly persons.

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