



# (De)centering Developmental for Government Challenges to Enhance the Quality of Life during a pandemic: A Case Study of the Dependent elderly in Betong Municipality, Yala province, Thailand

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**Abstract.** In the midst of the challenges brought by the COVID-19 epidemic, governments are tasked with improving the quality of life for vulnerable groups, especially the elderly who are dependent. This study investigates the notion of "Decentering Developmental Challenges for Government" as a means of empowering local communities and partners to address the special needs of the elderly during the pandemic. This study explores the combined efforts of the local government, civil society, and community members to solve the issues faced by the municipality of Betong, Yala, Thailand, which is recognized for its large number of dependent elderly citizens. Using a qualitative research approach that includes in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observations, the study captures the perspectives of the elderly, their caretakers, government officials and stakeholders. In order to promote the well-being of the elderly during the pandemic, inclusive decision-making procedures and contextually sensitive treatments are crucial. This study provides policymakers and practitioners with significant insights, calling for a decentralized and inclusive style of governance to improve the quality of life for the elderly who are reliant in the face of pandemic-related challenges.

**Keywords:** Government Challenge, Decentering Development, dependent elderly, covid-19 pandemic

## 1 Introduction: Objectives and Purposes of The Study

In the initial stages of the COVID-19 epidemic, governments around the world have confronted multiple problems to protect public health, preserve socioeconomic stability, and improve the quality of life for their populations. Certain demographic groups, like the elderly, have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic due to their significantly higher risk to severe disease and social isolation. During such critical times, ensuring the well-being and welfare of the elderly requires inventive and context-sensitive approaches that meet their particular needs and circumstances. During the pandemic, this study seeks to shed light on the notion of "Decentering Developmental Challenges for Government" in the context of improving the quality of life for aged dependents.

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The phrase "Decentering Developmental Difficulties" refers to the process of moving the focus away from top-down, centralized governance and decision-making in order to enable local communities and stakeholders to actively engage in recognizing challenges and finding appropriate solutions [1]. By doing so, governments may get a more nuanced knowledge of the particular challenges encountered by various parts of the population and establish focused policies and initiatives that are relevant to the local context.

This study focuses on the situation of Betong Municipality, Yala, Thailand, a region severely impacted by the epidemic and home to a large population of elderly residents who are dependent. The purpose of this study is to examine how local government, civic society, and community members have navigated the hurdles given by the epidemic and adopted steps to improve the quality of life for the elderly who are reliant on others. Understanding the viewpoints and experiences of the community members, especially the elderly and their caretakers, is crucial to the development of effective and long-lasting solutions in Betong Municipality, given its unique cultural and socioeconomic composition [2].

This study employs a qualitative research approach, including in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observations to collect rich data that capture the voices of the elderly and their caretakers. The study will be supplemented with perspectives from government officials, civil society actors, and key stakeholders in order to give a full and multidimensional understanding of the decentralized developmental initiatives used throughout the epidemic.

The findings of this study are anticipated to provide policymakers and practitioners at the local and national levels with significant insights. By decentering government challenges and fostering participatory decision-making processes, it is anticipated that a more responsive and inclusive model of governance can be established, allowing the elderly population in Betong Municipality and potentially other regions to adapt to the pandemic's adversities and thrive despite the difficulties.

## 2 Understanding Dependent Elderly Quality of Life

The quality of life of the elderly population that is dependent on others is an essential part of well-being that involves several aspects of physical, mental, social, and economic health. following are the components in order to understand the dependent elderly's quality of life:

**Physical and Mental Health:** For the elderly to have a fulfilling life, they must maintain excellent physical health. Chronic health issues, mobility restrictions, and age-related diseases might have a negative influence on their well-being. Moreover, mental health plays a key part in deciding the quality of life, since concerns like loneliness, depression, and cognitive decline may have a negative impact on everyday functioning and happiness [3].

**Social Connections:** Social interactions and a feeling of belonging are essential for the elderly to have a greater quality of life while they are dependent. Social isolation and feelings of loneliness may contribute to lower life satisfaction and mental health problems [4]. Maintaining social relationships with family, friends, and the community may enhance an individual's mental health and quality of life as a whole.

**Economic Stability:** The stability of the economy has a vital impact in influencing the quality of life for the elderly who are dependent. Numerous individuals depend on pensions, social security, or financial aid to cover their everyday expenses [5]. Economic security guarantees that people have access to needed products and services, which contributes to their well-being as a whole.

**Access to Essential Services:** The dependent elderly must have access to healthcare, necessities, and other essential services in order to preserve their health and independence. Life quality may be negatively impacted by restrictions to healthcare services and insufficient support systems [6].

### **3 A Concept for Decentering Governmental Developmental Challenges**

Emerging in the subject of governance and development, the notion of decentering developmental issues for government emphasizes inclusion, involvement, and contextually sensitive decision-making. This notion promotes a move from centralized, top-down methods to governance to more decentralized, participative, and locally relevant solutions. By decentering challenges, local communities, civil society organizations, and disadvantaged groups are empowered to identify and solve their own developmental concerns and needs. The decentering strategy challenges conventional conceptions of development, which often place external experts and centralized institutions at the forefront of decision-making processes. Instead, it acknowledges that communities hold invaluable information, experience, and perceptions of their own realities. This strategy seeks to provide more effective, sustainable, and culturally appropriate development projects by including local stakeholders in decision-making [7].

Decentering development, according to Alam et al. (2021), entails recognizing the agency and knowledge of people and communities as active participants in their own development processes. It aims to establish partnerships between government agencies, local communities, and civil society organizations in order to cooperatively identify and solve problems from the bottom up. The decentering strategy promotes more fair and inclusive developmental results by addressing the varying needs and aspirations of various groups. Decentering government's developmental challenges is widely regarded as a potent strategy for enhancing governance effectiveness and addressing complex and dynamic social concerns. This strategy is consistent with participatory government, community empowerment, and sustainable development ideals. Various situations, including

poverty alleviation, environmental sustainability, and public health, have been studied to establish its utility.

The decentering strategy has the ability to enhance decision-making and resource allocation, which is one of its primary merits. Governments may obtain a greater grasp of the individual needs and goals of various communities by incorporating local stakeholders. This allows for the design of focused policies and interventions that are more likely to have a beneficial effect on the population's well-being and quality of life. However, de-emphasizing the government's role in addressing developmental difficulties is not without its obstacles and limits. Effective implementation needs government agencies, communities, and civil society groups to create trust and cultivate meaningful relationships. To prevent the perpetuation of current power inequalities, it is essential to enhance the capacity of disadvantaged groups and guarantee their representation.

#### 4 **Government Intervension For The Dependent Elderly**

Government actions are essential for addressing the needs and boosting the quality of life of the aged population that is dependent. These interventions comprise an extensive array of policies, programs, and services designed to promote the physical, mental, social, and economic health of older persons who need help and care. This literature review offers a summary of prior studies on government initiatives for the elderly who are dependant, including:

**Healthcare Services:** Governments often establish healthcare programs geared to the special health requirements of the dependent elderly. Home-based care, elderly clinics, and specialized medical facilities are examples of these services. During pandemics, telemedicine and remote health monitoring have emerged as vital technologies, making healthcare services available to seniors even in rural places [8].

**Social Support Programs:** Social support programs are intended to prevent social isolation and increase the elderly's social connections. Government-sponsored social events, senior centers, and community involvement initiatives encourage contacts among older persons, therefore building a feeling of belonging and emotional health [4].

**Economic Assistance:** Economic help is essential for elderly who may have financial difficulties owing to restricted resources. Government interventions such as pensions, social security payments, and specialized financial assistance programs are intended to ease economic hardship and enhance the financial security of older individuals as a whole [5].

**Age-Friendly Infrastructure:** Infrastructure policies that are aged-friendly strive to create an environment that facilitates the independence and mobility of the elderly. To guarantee that older persons can traverse their communities with ease, governments invest in accessible public areas, transportation, and housing [3].

**Support for Caregivers:** Caregivers of dependent elderly need assistance to execute their obligations efficiently. To ease the stress on caregivers, government measures may include caregiver training programs, respite care services, and financial help [9]

**Long-Term Care:** Government interventions may include nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and home-based care programs for older persons with complicated care requirements. These programs attempt to offer complete care for seniors who need ongoing assistance [10].

Multiple government agencies, healthcare providers, community organizations, and civil society organizations often collaborate to conduct government interventions for the elderly who are dependent. Accessibility, cost, and compatibility with the individual requirements and preferences of the aged population determine the efficacy of these interventions. However, implementation of these programs may be complicated by budget limitations, bureaucratic difficulties, and a lack of understanding among the target population. It is imperative that policymakers continually evaluate and modify these interventions to ensure that they stay relevant and responsive to the changing needs of the elderly.

## **5 Context of Betong Municipality, Yala, Thailand**

Betong Municipality is located in the Thai province of Yala and acts as a vital administrative and commercial hub for the surrounding area. Understanding the demographic profile of the dependent senior population, the current government services and policies for the elderly, and the problems posed by the COVID-19 epidemic in Betong Municipality is essential for devising effective interventions to improve their quality of life.

### **5.1 Demographic Profile of the Elderly Population with Dependents**

The municipality of Betong has a considerable senior population, with a notable amount of residents aged 60 and over. According to the most recent demographic statistics around 15 percent of the municipality's population consists of senior citizens. A significant share of the elderly are dependent, as characterized by the need for help with everyday tasks owing to physical or mental limitations (Department of Provincial Administration, Thailand)

There were 110 dependent elderly in Betong Municipality, 31 of whom were bedridden and 79 of whom were home-bound elderly. (Betong Municipality Public Health, 2021). Most of them has confront varied health, access to key services, and social interaction issues. Understanding the particular needs and vulnerabilities of this demographic is crucial for designing government initiatives that would improve their quality of life throughout the epidemic.

## 5.2 Services and Policies of the Government for the Elderly

The Thai government has introduced a number of programs and regulations across the nation, including Betong Municipality, to assist the senior population. These projects attempt to enhance the well-being and social integration of the elderly by meeting their specific need. Among the most important government services and policies for the aged in Betong Municipality are the following:

**Healthcare Services:** Through public hospitals, community health centers, and mobile clinics, the government offers access to healthcare services. These institutions provide older persons with medical treatment, health screenings, and disease prevention activities (Ministry of Public Health, Thailand).

**Social Support Program:** Government-sponsored community-based programs and senior centers that provide social events, recreational opportunities, and educational sessions to develop social relationships among the elderly (Department of Older Persons, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Thailand).

**Economic Support Measures:** Through social security programs, pensions, and welfare schemes, the government gives financial help to qualified seniors in order to ease economic burdens (Department of Older Persons, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Thailand).

**Home-Based Care Services:** The government provides home-based care services for older adults in need of help with daily tasks and who are dependant. These services may consist of home healthcare visits and caregiver assistance (Ministry of Public Health, Thailand).

## 6 Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research design to explore the application of the "Decentering Developmental Challenges for Government" approach in enhancing the quality of life for the dependent elderly in Betong Municipality during the COVID-19 pandemic. Qualitative methodologies provide an in-depth knowledge of the experiences, views, and obstacles experienced by the elderly who are dependent and their caretakers. To recruit participants for interviews and focus group discussions, the study used a sampling strategy based on certain criteria. The sample comprising representatives of elderly residents of Betong Municipality who are dependent, their main caretakers, local government officials, civil society organization representatives, and other relevant stakeholders engaged in providing assistance to the elderly population.

## 6.1 Data Collection

A qualitative study in interview format. To study the guidelines for improving the quality of life for the elderly, which will study only the sample group of elderly people aged 60 years and over who are dependent, have Thai nationality, and have a database registered in Betong Municipality, Betong Subdistrict, Betong District, Yala Province, which has the following steps.

The population used in this study were dependent elderly in Betong Municipality, Betong District, Yala Province. There were 31 bedridden and 79 homeridens grouped according to the assessment of the elderly. Assessment form for ability to perform daily activities (ADL), a total of 110 people (Betong Municipality Public Health, 2021).

The sample group is the sample size of 15 people who come from the purposive sampling which consists of dependent elderly people in Betong municipality including carers, 10 families, 1 professional nurse, 1 public health professional, 2 village health volunteers, totaling 14 people.

- a) In-Depth Interviews: Semi-structured interviews are been done with elderly who are reliant on others and their caretakers. The interviews investigate their experiences throughout the epidemic, obstacles encountered, recovery techniques, and perceptions on government and community assistance.
- b) Focus Group Discussions: Separate focus groups held with local government officials and civil society organization representatives. During the epidemic, the conversations center on their responsibilities, experiences, and coordinated efforts to improve the quality of life for elderly dependents.
- c) Participant Observation: Through participant observation, researchers acquire insight into the actual routine of the dependent elderly, their relationships with caretakers, and the community assistance they receive.

## 6.2 Ethical Considerations

The study conforms to ethical rules, and all participants provide informed consent. Participants' confidentiality and identities will be protected throughout data collection, analysis, and reporting.

## 6.3 Limitations

Possible participant selection biases and dependence on self-reported data may have impacted the generalizability of the study's results. Nonetheless, the qualitative approach intends to give valuable insights into the background of Betong Municipality, Yala, Thailand, during the epidemic.

## 7 Findings

### 7.1 Decentering Developmental for Government Challenges

#### **Government-Community Collaboration**

The use of decentering developmental methodologies for government issues to improve quality of life during the COVID-19 pandemic in Betong Municipality, Yala, Thailand, presented a number of significant discoveries about regional collaboration. Betong Municipality, Civil society groups and community members played a crucial role in creating interventions and policies, so guaranteeing a more inclusive and contextually appropriate response to the needs of the elderly population that is dependent as follows:

#### *Engagement with Civil Society Organizations*

Betong Municipality actively worked with a variety of civil society organizations in order to better comprehend the issues encountered by the elderly who are dependent during the pandemic. Collaboration with groups specializing in healthcare system, health services, and community development allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of the unique requirements of the older population. These relationships enhanced the development of interventions and support programs by facilitating the sharing of information and experience.

#### *Active Participation of Community Members*

Betong Municipality promoted the active participation of community members in identifying problems and co-designing solutions. Community leaders, local seniors, and caregivers engaged in government-sponsored seminars and consultations to express their perspectives and experiences. This bottom up strategy enabled community members to participate in decision-making, resulting in initiatives that were more relevant and appropriate to the elderly population.

#### *Participative Decision-Making Procedures*

Betong Municipality Decentralizing decision-making processes to enhanced stakeholder involvement and participation. Community members engaged with government officials and civil society group leaders to determine intervention priorities and deploy resources efficiently. This participatory approach increased the feeling of belonging and responsibility among the stakeholders, promoting a collective commitment to enhancing the quality of life for the elderly who are dependent.



## **Interventions That Become Contextually Adaptive**

During the COVID-19 epidemic, the implementation of decentering developmental methodologies to government difficulties in Betong Municipality, Yala, Thailand, led in contextually responsive actions to improve the quality of life of the dependent elders. These approaches were created to satisfy the unique requirements of the elderly population while being flexible to changing conditions as followed:

### *Tailored Support for the Distinctive Requirements of Dependent Elderly*

Through the decentering method, also a policy from the central government, the Betong Municipality recognized and addressed the unique needs of the dependent elderly in Betong Municipality. Individual health problems, socioeconomic backgrounds, and preferences were used to personalize interventions to give focused assistance. This individualized approach guaranteed that the elderly got the attention and support required to meet their unique needs.

### *Adaptability of Interventions to Altering Circumstances:*

The COVID-19 pandemic brought very quick changes in conditions and difficulties. Betong Municipality responds to these changes and adapts actions appropriately. As the epidemic expanded, for instance, the government was able to change healthcare delivery procedures, extend telemedicine alternatives, and establish alternate support networks to suit the changing demands of the elderly population.

Also, this approach enabled senior citizens and their caretakers to actively determine the sorts of treatments and assistance they needed. The government fostered dialogues and talks with the elderly and their caretakers, enabling them to express their opinions and choices. This inclusive approach not only enhanced the relevance of programs but also empowered the elderly and their caretakers, generating a feeling of freedom and respect.

### *Enhancing Social Support Systems*

During the COVID-19 epidemic, Betong Municipality, Yala, Thailand, prioritized the establishment of social support networks for the dependent aged. The government-initiated steps to reduce social isolation, encourage virtual connections, and fund community-driven activities to combat loneliness among the elderly. The administration of Betong Municipality established programs and activities that promoted social connection while complying to health and safety regulations in overcome the social isolation issues encountered by the elderly who are dependant. These activities included the organization of small, socially distanced events where seniors may interact with their colleagues. Such gatherings allowed the elderly to overcome feelings of isolation and build a sense of community.

During moments of lockdown and limited movement, the government encouraged senior citizens to establish virtual friendships. Virtual platforms were used to support

video conferences, online meetings, and virtual social gatherings. These virtual contacts enabled older persons to retain social relationships with family, friends, and community members, therefore mitigating the negative impacts of social isolation.

The decentering strategy included engaging with local community members and groups to build community-driven initiatives that explicitly addressed senior dependency and loneliness. Community leaders and volunteers took an active role in finding those living alone and creating initiatives to assure frequent contact and companionship. These community-driven activities had a big influence in reducing the elderly's sense of isolation and improving their mental health.

The strengthening of social support networks through these interventions proved crucial in fostering a sense of connectedness and reducing the negative impact of social isolation on the quality of life of the dependent elderly during the COVID-19 pandemic in Betong Municipality.

*“I want the officials to visit often Because staying at home is lonely, since the pandemic I haven't met anyone. I'm lonely”*

### **Enhanced Healthcare Services**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Betong Municipality, Yala, Thailand, led to the delivery of improved healthcare services for the dependent elderly. Through telemedicine and virtual consultations, targeted healthcare outreach, and coordinated efforts with healthcare practitioners, these programs aimed to improve access to healthcare. The government encouraged telemedicine and virtual consultations for elderly dependents in order to assure continuing access to healthcare services while limiting physical contact. Through digital platforms, healthcare practitioners gave medical advice, remote monitoring, and prescription services, enabling seniors to obtain prompt medical assistance without leaving their homes. This strategy was crucial in addressing health issues during the pandemic and lowering the possibility of COVID-19 exposure.

Betong Municipality's strategy emphasizes focused outreach initiatives to identify and meet the unique healthcare requirements of the elderly population that is reliant. In collaboration with community groups, government healthcare staff performed home visits and health examinations for needy seniors. This proactive approach guaranteed that anyone in need of medical care or assistance got quick aid. The government partnered with healthcare providers and organizations to optimize the supply of services to older individuals who were dependant. Public hospitals, clinics, and commercial healthcare institutions collaborated with government organizations to offer comprehensive treatment for seniors with chronic diseases. This joint effort resulted in a more comprehensive approach to healthcare, tailored to the particular requirements of the elderly population.

### **Economic Support Measures**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Betong Municipality, Yala, Thailand, led to the deployment of economic assistance measures to improve the quality of life of the dependent elderly. These efforts intended to offer financial help to elderly who were financially vulnerable, aid carers in reducing financial burden, and build community-based economic resilience programs.

#### *Financial Assistance for Elderly People in Need:*

During the pandemic, the authorities of Betong Municipality developed financial aid programs for older citizens who were economically disadvantaged and experiencing problems. These essential financial assistance services included direct cash transfers, pensions, and welfare programs. The strategy enabled the discovery of particular criteria to guarantee that financial aid reached individuals with the greatest need.

#### *Assistance for Caregivers to Reduce Financial Strain:*

Recognizing the vital role played by caretakers in providing care for elderly dependents, the government offered assistance to reduce their financial burden. Caregivers received stipends, training opportunities, and access to healthcare services to maintain their health and ability to continue providing care. This assistance recognized the significance of caretakers and their contributions to the well-being of the senior population as a whole.

#### *Programs for Community-Based Economic Resilience:*

The development of community-based economic resilience initiatives encouraged community people, especially the elderly, to engage in local economic activities and to engage in entrepreneurship. Community members partnered to design income-generating initiatives, giving the elderly chances to engage in activities that not only supported their economic wellbeing, but also developed a feeling of purpose and belonging.

## **7.2 Impact on the Quality of Life of Dependent Elderly**

During the COVID-19 epidemic, the Betong Municipality has introduced numerous interventions and support measures that resulted in better physical and mental health outcomes, greater social connections and emotional well-being, decreased economic challenges, and expanded senior population access to key services and healthcare as followed:

### **Enhanced Physical and Mental Health Outcomes:**

Through decentering, the government emphasized the health and well-being of older individuals who are dependent. Access to telemedicine and virtual consultations, together with improved healthcare services, permitted quick medical treatment and monitoring of health issues. This proactive strategy resulted in improved treatment of chronic diseases, early diagnosis of health problems, and improved physical health outcomes for the aged population as a whole. In addition, the government's focused healthcare outreach and community-driven initiatives guaranteed that elderly dependents got individualized and appropriate treatment, resulting in improved mental health. Community involvement activities that reduced feelings of social isolation and loneliness had a favourable effect on the mental health of older persons, creating a sense of belonging and emotional stability.

### **Improved Social Interactions and Emotional Health:**

The Betong Municipality has prioritized social support networks for dependent elderly. During lockdowns, measures to minimize social isolation and establish virtual connections facilitated regular social interactions among elderly adults. Therefore, the elderly had a better sense of connection and emotional wellbeing, mitigating the detrimental effects of social isolation on mental health. Most elderly dependents in excellent mental health may suffer emotions of isolation. Due to their physical state, the majority of the elderly and their caretakers communicate monthly with volunteers or nursing staff based on schedule arranged from the government.

### **Reduced Economic Difficulties and Enhanced Financial Security:**

The older population's economic troubles were relieved by the deployment of economic support measures, such as cash support for elderly persons in need and support for caretakers. Financial assistance and community-based economic resilience initiatives enabled seniors to efficiently manage their financial demands. As a consequence, older dependents felt less financial strain, resulting in greater financial security and stability.

### **Access to Necessary Services and Healthcare:**

During the epidemic, Betong Municipality has Improved healthcare services, such as telemedicine and virtual consultations, let older persons to get medical treatment without incurring COVID-19 exposure. Additionally, community-driven initiatives and focused outreach improved the aged population's overall quality of life by facilitating access to essential resources and services.

## 8 Challenges and Limitations Facing

### 8.1 Resource Constraints and Funding Challenges

Betong Municipality, Yala, Thailand, faced various resource constraints and funding challenges that impacted the implementation and sustainability of interventions for the dependent elderly. Limited financial resources and competing priorities may have hindered the scale and scope of support measures. Moreover, during times of crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the demand for resources has escalated, putting additional strain on available funding.

### 8.2 Communication and Coordination between Stakeholders

Effective communication and coordination between various stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, community leaders, and healthcare providers, were crucial for success. However, challenges in communication and coordination may have arisen due to differing priorities, lack of standardized communication channels, and limited information sharing. Such limitations could have hindered the seamless delivery of services and the identification of the most vulnerable elderly individuals.

### 8.3 Addressing Cultural and Contextual Nuances

The Betong Municipality is home to diverse cultural and contextual nuances that must be considered while implementing interventions for the dependent elderly. Cultural factors, language barriers, and community specific needs may have necessitated tailored approaches to ensure interventions were contextually relevant and well-received. Failure to address these nuances could have led to misunderstandings, resistance, or limited uptake of support programs.

As with any developmental approach, Betong Municipality encountered challenges and limitations that required careful attention and adaptation. Addressing resource constraints and funding challenges is crucial to sustaining support measures for the dependent elderly in the long term. Enhancing communication and coordination mechanisms between stakeholders can facilitate smoother collaboration and service delivery. Finally, acknowledging and addressing cultural and contextual nuances is essential for developing interventions that resonate with the diverse needs of the elderly population in Betong Municipality.

## 9 Conclusion and Discussion

### 9.1 Summary of Major Findings:

The study on "Decentering Developmental for Government Challenges to Enhance the Quality of Life during a Pandemic: A Case Study of the Dependent Elderly in Betong Municipality, Yala, Thailand" explored Betong Municipality challenges faced by the dependent elderly during the COVID-19 pandemic. The key findings of the study are as follows:

**Government-Community Collaboration:** The decentering approach emphasized active collaboration with civil society organizations and community members. Participatory decision-making processes enabled tailored interventions and empowered elderly individuals and caregivers.

**Contextually Responsive Interventions:** Interventions were designed to be flexible and responsive to changing circumstances during the pandemic. Tailored support for specific needs of the dependent elderly ensured personalized care and assistance.

**Strengthening Social Support Networks:** Initiatives were implemented to combat social isolation, promote virtual connections, and address loneliness among the elderly population. Community-driven programs played a vital role in enhancing social connections and emotional well-being. **Strengthening Social Support Networks:** Initiatives were implemented to combat social isolation, promote virtual connections, and address loneliness among the elderly population. Community-driven programs played a vital role in enhancing social connections and emotional well-being.

**Enhanced Healthcare Services:** Access to telemedicine and virtual consultations improved healthcare accessibility. Targeted outreach efforts ensured that vulnerable elderly individuals received timely medical attention and support.

**Economic Support Measures:** Financial assistance for vulnerable elderly individuals, caregiver support, and community-based economic resilience programs alleviated economic hardships and increased financial security.

### 9.2 Contributions to Literature and Policy Implications:

The study makes several contributions to both the literature and policy implications. Firstly, it highlights the significance of the decentering developmental approach in addressing challenges faced by the dependent elderly. The findings demonstrate the effectiveness of contextually responsive and community-driven interventions in improving the quality of life for older adults during a pandemic.

Policy implications include the need for investment in elderly-focused policies, resource allocation for vulnerable populations, and strengthening collaboration

between stakeholders. Governments must empower local communities and recognize the importance of integrating decentering principles into governance.

**Resource Allocation for Vulnerable Populations:** Adequate resources and funding should be allocated to support measures for vulnerable populations, including the dependent elderly. Governments must ensure that financial constraints do not hinder the provision of essential services and support during challenging times.

**Strengthening Collaboration with Stakeholders:** Governments should foster stronger collaboration with civil society organizations, community leaders, healthcare providers, and caregivers. Effective communication and coordination between stakeholders are essential to deliver comprehensive and contextually relevant interventions.

### **9.3 Community-Driven Approaches for Future Pandemics:**

The success of the decentering developmental approach highlights the importance of community-driven approaches for addressing challenges during future pandemics. To promote community-driven efforts, the following recommendations are pertinent:

**Empowering Local Communities:** Governments should empower local communities by involving them in decision-making processes and acknowledging their agency in shaping interventions. Community members should be encouraged to take ownership of initiatives that address the needs of the dependent elderly.

**Capacity Building and Training:** Capacity building programs and training initiatives should be provided to community leaders and volunteers to enhance their skills in identifying and responding to the needs of older adults effectively.

**Recognizing and Utilizing Local Resources:** Governments should recognize and utilize existing local resources, expertise, and networks to support the wellbeing of the elderly population. Leveraging community resources can foster sustainable and contextually relevant solutions.

### **9.4 Integration of Decentering Developmental Challenges in Governance:**

To promote the long-term integration of decentering developmental challenges in governance, the following recommendations are essential: **Policy Integration:** Governments should incorporate the principles of decentering developmental challenges into policymaking processes at all levels. This includes acknowledging the importance of community engagement, participatory decision-making, and context specific interventions.

**Monitoring and Evaluation:** Robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be established to assess the effectiveness and impact of decentering

developmental interventions. Data-driven evaluations can inform future policymaking and ensure the continuous improvement of support measures.

Capacity Development for Civil Servants: Government agencies should invest in the capacity development of civil servants to adopt and implement decentering approaches effectively. Training programs can help officials understand and embrace the values of inclusivity and community participation.

In conclusion, the decentering developmental approach has far-reaching implications for government policies, community-driven efforts, and governance. Emphasizing the needs of the dependent elderly, empowering local communities, and integrating decentering principles into governance can lead to more effective and equitable responses to challenges during pandemics and other crises.

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