



Elderly care and the response of the state: A socio-economic study of old aged people in India

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Abstract

The old aged are highly open to abuse, where a person is intentionally or unconsciously harmed, usually by someone who is part of the family or otherwise close to the dupe. It is very important that steps should be taken to protect aged people from abuse. Being relatively weak, elderly are defenseless to physical abuse. Their resources, including finances ones are also often misused. In addition, the elderly may suffer from emotional and mental abuse for various reasons and in different ways.

Keywords: age, abuse, families, behaviour

Introduction

Aged or old age consists of approaching or surpassing the average life duration of human beings. The term old age can be related with physical inability, biological corrosion or disabilities or even psychological factors. The boundary of the mature people cannot be defined in the approved manner because it does not have the same meaning in all societies. Government of India adopted national policy on older persons in January 1999. The policy defines elderly or senior citizen as a person who is of age 60 years or above (Draft national police, 2011). 'Rapid growing of industry, innovation in India has great effect on the way of living standard. The belief of joint families in Indian society is fading slowly, which was based on the love, affection and tradition. It has also changed the life of family. People have started believing in "Nuclear family" rather than combined or joint families. It has made Elderly people to live with their own family including husband, wife and their children. This culture has also affected the emotions of each individual person. In present state of affairs parents feel protected to live in old age homes rather than to live with their children because of the behavior of their children towards them. Due to this reason they have started moving in the old age home where they live rest of their life till death

In India the population of elderly people is growing rapidly, in 1901 it was 12.1 million, but in 2011, it has been recorded as 103.2 million. The population of elderly people in India (over 60 years) ranks second in the world. In modern times, for all realistic purposes the individuals who are above the sixty years of old are considered to be aged or senior citizen of the state. Sequential age of fifty eight or sixty years is considered the beginning of old age. However the existence of mass poverty, growing trends towards nuclear family, greater life suspense and decline of cultural values and norms are engendering faltering block on the part of the aged to cope with the changing environment. As a result, the elderly population in India is facing a series of problems in their day to day life.

Objectives of Study

The number of elderly people is increasing rapidly and the world is facing a demographic disturbance, therefore it is a challenge to manage the care and support of the rising proportion of older people's needs wants and desires. The main aim of the study is to explore how elderly people live and cope with their lives at home and in society.

1. To study the elderly care framework of INDIA.
2. To study socio-economic status of elderly people.
3. To identify the cause of elder abuse.

Conditions of Old Aged People in India.

The status of the elderly people in INDIA is not much different from what it is in other parts of world. The elderly people are generally respected and are never considered as a burden to the family. They contribute their louse to the family income. The wisdom and experience of the elderly was an asset to the community. Hence it was natural that the elderly accorded a high status. But the things have changed, as the clench of our socio-cultural and traditional values is losing, elderly people are rapidly emerging as a big problem in INDIA also. As the westernization spreads and strengthens here and everywhere, elderly people are put on their own care. In present time people have started believing in 'nuclear family', rather than combined or joint. It has made people to live with one's own nuclear family which includes husband, wife and their children. Traditional values emphasizing the significance of elderly in the family and society are at a markdown. The approach is fast diffusion in our society. As a result, the elderly people are the kingpin of power in the family and society, and find it difficult to reunite to the new situation and subsequent emotional problems are developing among them. Moreover the death of the joint family in many households has made the life of elderly people painful.

In India the 60+ population which was estimated 12 million in 1901, had gone up to 20 million in 1951, and further crossed 80 million mark in 2001. The projected 60+ population is 146.1 million for 2025. The 80+ population alone in the

country was estimated to be 8 million by 2001. So far as INDIA is concerned, population age 60 and above, as per census 2001, was 6.75 lakhs. Out of these, men accounted for 3.60 lakhs (54.2 percent) and the women accounted for 3.09 lakhs (45.8 percent). In other words, the proportion of the aged population (60+) to total population of the state was 6.7 percent. Percentage of male population age 60 + to total male population was 6.8 and women age 60+ accounted for 6.5 percent of the total female population. Further, the number of people age 80 or more was 82 thousand, out of which the male population was higher (54.4 percent) than the female population (45.6 percent). Population age 60 and above in the state is expected to cross 10 lakhs by 2020. The study reveals that due to be short of awareness about their rights in old age, many people are obliged to live in inhuman conditions. With significant increase in the elderly population, it has been noticed by volunteers that elder abuse has become unchecked and that a bulk of older people have reconciled to their circumstances for sake of well-being of their loved ones and their own peace of mind," said Himanshu Rath, founder-chairperson of Age well foundation. NGO has been granted Special Consultative Status for old-age welfare in the United Nations' Economic and Social Council.

Problems Faced by Elderly People

Health

It has been said that "we start dying the day we are born". The aging process is identical with failing health. While death in young people in countries such as India is mainly due to infectious diseases, older people are mostly vulnerable to non-communicable diseases. Failing health due to advancing age is complicated by non-availability to good quality, age-sensitive, health care for a large percentage of older persons in the country. In addition, poor ease of access and reach, lack of information and knowledge and/or high costs of disease management make reasonable elder care beyond the reach of older persons, especially those who are poor and disadvantaged. To address the issue of failing health, it is of prime importance that good quality health care be made available and accessible to the elderly in an age-sensitive manner.

Financial

Economic sanctuary is as relevant for the elderly as it is for those of any other age group. Those who are unable to produce an adequate income should be facilitated to do so. As far as possible, elderly who are capable, should be encouraged, and if necessary, supported to be occupied in some economically prolific manner. Others who are incapable of supporting themselves should be provided with partial or full social welfare grants that at least provide for their basic needs. Families and communities may be encouraged to support the elderly living with them through counseling and local self-governance. According to a most recent study conducted by Age well Foundation, 65 per cent of old people are poor with no root of known income. Good news is that 35 per cent still have money, properties, savings, investments, inheritance and above all loyal children. However India has a population of 100 million old people and that the number will touch 324 million by 2050.

Loneliness

separation, or a deep sense of loneliness, is a common complaint of many elderly is the feeling of being isolated. While there are a few who oblige it on themselves, isolation is most often imposed purposefully or involuntarily by the families and/or communities where the elderly live. Isolation is a dreadful feeling that, if not addressed, leads to tragic deterioration of the quality of life.

Neglect

The elderly, especially those who are weak and/or dependent, requires physical, mental and emotional care and support. When this is not provided, they suffer from neglect, a problem that occurs when a person is left uncared for and that is often linked with isolation.

Fear

Many older persons live in fear. Whether balanced or unreasonable, this is a relevant problem face by the elderly that needs to be carefully and effectively addressed. Elderly who suffer from fear need to be reassured. Those for whom the fear is considered to be irrational need to be counseled and, if required, may be treated as per their needs.

Social Assistance Programs Run By Government

The Nation Social aid Programme in which the financial assistance is provided to poor people lessening below the poverty line (BPL). The Schemes has following four components viz. To develop a society which offers favorable and motivating atmosphere for the growth and development, in a safe and shielding environment; ensuring dignified life to all the vulnerable groups such as children, women, elderly people, PwDs (persons with Disabilities), members of General, SC, ST and OBCs

- Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme: -Under the scheme, a financial assistance of Rs.400 per month per receiver is provided to the old persons of 65 years of age are above, belonging to BPL. Under the scheme a total of 10919 persons have been covered.
- National family Benefit Scheme (NFBS):Under the schemes, a financial assistance at the rate of Rs 10000 (Ten thousand) is being provided to the family in case of death of primary bread winner/earner of the family, living below poverty line (BPL).
- Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS). Under this scheme, a financial assistance at the rate of Rs 400 per month per head is provided to the widows above the age of 40 years belonging below the poverty line (BPL) family. This scheme is launched w.e.f. 01-01-2010. Under the scheme a total of 275 persons have been covered.
- Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS) Under this scheme, a financial assistance at the rate of Rs 400 per month per head is provided to physically Handicapped Persons above the age of 18 years belonging below the poverty line (BPL) family. This scheme is launched w.e.f. 01-01-2010. Under the scheme a total of 150 persons have been covered.
- J&K State Advisory Board for the Welfare & Development of Gujjar & Bakerwal In order to have

focused attention towards the Development of Gujjar Bakerwal Community, State Advisory Board for the Development of Gujjar Bakerwal has been constituted in the year 1974 by Government order No. 23-PS of 1974 dated 18.03.1974. The main objective of this Board is to identify the factors which are responsible for the Socio-economic backwardness of Gujjar Bakerwal community and simultaneously advice suitable measures and economic interventions for rapid socio-economic development of Gujjar & Bakerwal community.

- Aam Aadmi Bima Yojna: The scheme provides death and disability insurance cover to BPL families in this case the head of the family or one earning member of the household becomes disabled due to an accident or dies before the age of 60 years due to natural/accidental cause. To be eligible under this scheme the applicant must be in the age group of 18-59 years, preferably Head of family of a rural landless household with meager source of income.
- Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojna Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojna This scheme has been launched on pilot basis in district Anantnag & Kathua with the aim to improve the health and nutritional status of pregnant, lactating women and their young infants, the beneficiary (pregnant and lactating women) must be in the age group of 19 years and above up to first two live births.

Conclusion

The Indian society is gradually changing from the agriculture to the industrialized one. This has caused growth and redeployment of the population, with changing magnitude of the young and old with a outstanding increase in prolonged existence. With the result, there has been a far-reaching change in the economic system, and the family system. All of them have made wonderful impact on social institutions in regard to care of aged. Although in the immediate past, the care of the elderly has been mainly a responsibility of the families. The family support and care of the elderly are unlikely to disappear in the near future. The old age problems are generally neglected and avoided. The elderly face a number of problems which range from absence of ensured and sufficient income to support themselves and their dependents, to ill health, absence of social security, to loss of social role and recognition, problems of adjustment and the non-availability of opportunities for creative use of free time.

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