



HIDDEN VICTIM: UNDERSTANDING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST SENIOR CITIZEN IN INDIA

Sociology

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ABSTRACT

Domestic violence against senior citizens is a pervasive issue with a rising incidence that demands urgent attention. This study aims to comprehensively explore the multifaceted factors contributing to domestic violence against the elderly and analyze its far-reaching impacts on the physical, psychological, and social well-being of the senior population. Understanding the specific challenges faced by this vulnerable demographic is crucial for the development of society which aims to foster a safer and more supportive environment for the elderly population. **Purpose-** This paper will study the impacts of cultural norms, traditions, gender role on the occurrence and under reporting of domestic violence against senior citizens. **Design/methodology/approach-** In this paper the secondary data will be used which includes research journals, newspaper articles, survey, electronic media reports and other government official records. **Finding-** Due to the changed attitude of the younger generation towards the elderly various problems are faced by the older generation. Society has become more self-centric, materialistic, and achievement oriented so that elderly are being deprived of their rights. The younger generation considers the elderly as a burden on society, but they indeed feel to realize the fact that they are a resource which can contribute to the wellbeing of society. Traditional joint family systems existed in India which always gave respect to elders and their roles were very clear.

KEYWORDS

Abuse, Aging, Violence, Tradition, Migration

INTRODUCTION-

According to national center for elder Abuse, "Abuse is verbal, emotional, psychological, mental, physical, sexual, and self-neglect". The term "Elder Abuse" refers to abuse at home, in public places and in old age homes. It refers to any intentional or negligent act by a caregiver or any other person that causes harm to a vulnerable person of age sixty or above.

Abuse of senior citizen is often an unspoken issue in India. Compared to other kind of abuse senior citizen abuse is unique in the fact that it often happens within the same household in which the senior citizens are staying the abusers are family members on whom the person is dependent and most often the abuse goes unreported. Abuse can be defined as cruel or violent treatment of any person that is intended to harm that person, especially when coming from a person who is trusted when the person being abused by someone is a senior citizen, it can be termed as elderly abuse or senior citizen abuse.

Traditionally Indian culture promotes respect for senior citizens, with the changing lifestyle and moving away from joint families and even nuclear families abuse has become a big issue. Some people may treat senior citizen parents or family members as a burden and not look after them well, others may be more interested in their property, and ill treat them to get rights to the property.

Changes in family pattern:

Joint family → nuclear family → Single parent family → Individualism.

Now children consider their parents economically unproductive, which means they are useless though they are not earning, they cannot take the discission. Indian older women are facing triple jeopardy: that of being old, of being women and of being poor. Lack of familiarity with technology is another big problem, since many of the protections depend on access to the internet and filing online complaints at various web portals and senior citizen helplines. Although laws and institutions exist in India to prevent abuse and provide relief to senior citizens, in practice there may be lack of awareness of such law it may be difficult for senior citizens to access these protections.

As per the report there were 149million persons aged 60 years and above in 2022 comprising around 10% of the country's population and by 2050 this population will double to 20.8% with the absolute number at 347million. The United Nations and world health organization have highlighted abuse or senior citizen abuse as a global issue that affects millions of older people around the world the UN general assembly passed resolution 66/127, designation June 15 as "world elder abuse awareness day" to raise awareness about this problem.

The Indian culture is automatically respectful and supportive of elders. Now the times are changing, and the modern generation wants everything on its own terms and conditions, without seeing and

considering the elder generation as important as they are. The impacts of domestic violence on senior citizens extend far beyond the immediate physical harm. Emotional trauma, mental health deterioration, and the erosion of self-esteem are among the silent devastations that this vulnerable demographic often endures in silence. By unravelling the complexities of these impacts, it aims to raise awareness and advocate for the creation of a more compassionate and supportive environment for the elderly in Jharkhand. This paper focuses on a journey to amplify the voices that have long been muted, to bring attention to the plight of senior citizens facing domestic violence in India. Through an in-depth examination of the root causes and consequences of this issue contribute meaningful result in society where the golden years of our elder characterized by dignity, respect and security.

Ramamurti and Jamuna, (1993) Bose, (2004): The decline of joint family system and rise of nuclear or single parent family is an important factor that has undermined the position and statue of the older adult.

Jamuna, (2003): The studies has been conducted on issues of elder care and elder abuse, stated dwindling of the joint family, rise of dual carrier families, a possible shift in filial pretty values, and the increasing life expectancy with greater chance of prolonged old age are the major causes of elderly abuse. The dependency of older persons on younger generations, adjust mental problem and intergenerational conflict leads to elder mistreatment.

Shankardass, (2008): Elder abuse and neglect are seen to prevail among the different socio-economic groups, religious communities, and various regions, cutting across rural urban divides. It occurs at any educational level or at any development state. It seems to have a gender dimension with older women compared to older men seem to be vulnerable to it, but there has been more reporting to it by older men.

Pappathy, (2007): "aging: scientific perspective and social issue" psychological problems such as dementia, sexual problems and emotional disorders may arise due to reduction in income, change in social status, due to retirement and hormonal changes strained relations and loss of respect of near and dear ones.

Raju, (2002): The traditional welfare institutions and higher socio-cultural values of Indian societies tressed respect and provision of care for the elderly and the elderly were generally taken care by the family itself.

The main reasons behind underreporting incidents of elder abuse are improper implementations and ineffective protective measures, lack of community-based support system for senior citizens. Impact of family structure and intergenerational gap within families contribute to

domestic violence against senior citizens. Socio-economic factors, cultural norms and inadequate support systems contribute to the high incidence of domestic violence against senior citizens that affect their physical and mental well beings. Ineffective legal intervention and underreporting of hidden cases contribute to a vulnerable environment for the elderly population.

Most of the elderly live with their children or their relatives, co-residence with their married children is a predominant living arrangement. A smaller portion of the elderly are living with their daughter and many of them are widows. Most of the elderly are not working and therefore do not have their own. A lack of income of their own made them dependent on their children and their other relatives, which led to unpleasant experiences for the elderly study reveals that the vulnerable section among elderly population are widows.

The 2011 census highlighted the feminization of elderly population in India. For woman being female has meant a lifetime of discrimination at home and elsewhere which continues even in old age approximately 66% of elderly woman are fully dependent on others and 32% do not own any assets of their own. In a large patriarchal society depends, especially physical dependence and financial dependence on family member may impact health seeking behavior negatively, resulting in delay or denial in seeking care as well physical or emotional abuse of the dependent family member. With fast changing socio-economic scenario, industrialization rapid urbanization, higher aspiration among the youth and the increasing participation of women in the workforce, roots of traditional joint family system have become thing of past. In such a changing situation, most older people, who have spent most of their life with their joint /extended families are on the verge of isolation or marginalization in old age. At this age when they need family support most they must live on their own. Even the basic needs and rights of many of them are not addressed. Social marginalization, loneliness isolation and even Negligence in old age lead violation of human rights of older people.

Dak (1997) reported that with advancing age, most elders' losses their family headship role as a result there is a corresponding decline in their status and the power in the family this is true in both elderly men and woman.

The traditional norms and values of Indian society led stress on showing respect and providing care for the aged however in recent times society is witnessing a gradual but definite weathering of the joint family system. As a result of which many parents are being neglected by their families exposing to the lack of emotional, physical and financial support. These older people are facing a lot of problems in the absence of adequate social security. This clearly reveals that aging has become a major social challenge. There is a need to provide for the economic and health needs of the elderly Liebig and Rajan (2005). For these reasons policy maker service planners and view in formal care of the elderly as extremely important and wish to reserve it as a social Resource. The country like India, state cannot enter as a major player in elder care in view of high (prohibitive) cost to the exchequer and the low national priority to elder care the need to develop models of home or family care may be supplemented by suitable adapting them to a variety of respite services while at the same time suitably adapting them to Indian conditions

CONCLUSION-

Indian society has changed not only in terms of culture and traditions but also imparting value-based education to their children in present situation. Conflict, violence, adjustment problem has become normal feature of Indian families the growing intolerance among youth, coupled with their inability to adjust with the elderly is just one of the prime reasons for the rise in the number of old age home in India. The circumstance completely changed over time. Value erosion is a result of migration, consumerism, and other related factors. The elderly citizens need urgent attention. They do not need our pity, but the understanding love and care of their fellow human beings. It is our duty to see that they do not spend the twilight years of their life in isolation, pain, and misery.

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