



Problems of Elderly People in India and Challenges Facing the Society

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DOI - 10.5281/zenodo.10891915

Abstract:

In a country with ancient cultural traditions like India, taking care of the elderly in a joint family system was the responsibility of the entire family and the care of the elderly was taken from a sense of sanskar, but in the modern society, the rapid urbanization, business-oriented lifestyles and the resulting mobility, business orientation of the younger generation and the modern economy they have received.. Due to these factors, the older generation has to occupy a subordinate and secondary position in the modern industrialized social life. There is a significant increase in the physical and mental disorders and related problems of the elderly that occur with increasing age, and their severity and seriousness is confronting. In general, the average life expectancy of individuals has increased due to the development of health facilities and other facilities for the elderly in Indian society after independence. Therefore, people who have completed sixty years are faced with various problems from family, physical, mental point of view and this has created many serious problems in the life of the elderly. This study will provide information about the problems faced.

Keywords: *Elderly, Expectancy, Lifestyle, Expenses, Neglect, Disorders, Seriousness.*

Introduction:

Elderly is a relative concept in that there are various aspects of the concept of physical mental and social condition of the person and attitude towards the society. It is generally considered that a man is old when he reaches the age of sixty years. The age of sixty to sixty five years of a person's life and beyond is considered as old age. In modern times, significant advances in medicine and the easy and quick availability of up-to-date medicines have led to a reduction in mortality and an

increase in life expectancy. Therefore, the number of elderly and the proportion of the total population is increasing day by day. Faced with the changing social and economic situation, many types of problems arise in front of the elderly, especially the maintenance, sustenance, medical treatment expenses of the economically weak and dependent elderly. Financial matters pose serious questions to the individual and society. Many elderly people find it difficult to adjust to the post-retirement lifestyle of

employed persons. Especially the retired elderly from the lower socio-economic levels feel the dissatisfaction with their changed lifestyle more intensely.

In general, the position of an elderly person in society depends largely on his active participation in productivity and usefulness. In traditional agrarian societies, the older generation is generally seen to have a place of respect and dignity; Because the old person's empirical knowledge in farming is useful to the younger generation of farmers. Moreover, since the ownership of the land is often with the old man, his position as the head of the family remains intact. In modern urban society after industrialization, however, as a result of socio-economic changes and the increasing influence of modern technology, it is seen that the social position of the elderly has declined.

Although the seniority and long experience of the elderly are still considered useful qualities in fields like politics, in many other fields the role of the elderly is neglected and overlooked. As a result, the feeling that they are unwanted and useless in the society increases in many old people and it increases the feeling of despair and frustration. Elders are not often looked upon as a source of empirical knowledge as knowledge is now easily and quickly available due to the increasing spread of information technology in modern urban society. Due to this, their respectable position in the society and family is threatened. The problem of isolation of the elderly from

the society seems to be taking a serious form in modern times. In the industrialized countries many changes have taken place in the family structure. Rapid urbanization in modern society, business-oriented way of life and dynamism arising from them, business orientation of the young generation and the important place they have got in the modern economy etc. Due to these factors, the older generation has to occupy a subordinate and secondary position in the modern industrialized social life. There has been a significant increase in the physical and mental disorders and associated problems of the elderly with increasing age, and their severity and seriousness is being faced. Also, the increase in the elderly population is likely to have an adverse effect on the overall economy. Also the problem of shelter for the elderly who have lost their family support has worsened.

Research Objectives:

- 1) A review of the number of elderly in the Indian population.
- 2) To know the severity of various problems of the elderly.
- 3) To discuss measures to solve the problems of the elderly.

Research Hypotheses:

- 1) The elderly population has increased.
- 2) Elderly people have to face various problems.
- 3) Government and other measures are becoming insufficient to solve the problems of the elderly.

Research Methods:

Secondary sources have been used to write the present research paper, including edited books, newspapers, magazines and internet etc.

Significance of the research problem:

In a country with ancient cultural traditions like India, it was the responsibility of the entire family to take care of the elderly together in the family system and the care of the elderly was taken from the sense of sanskar, but in the modern society, due to various reasons such as increasing urbanization, industrialization, personal development, many problems have arisen in the life of the elderly and in general, health in the Indian society after independence. Due to the development of facilities and other facilities for the elderly, the average life expectancy of individuals has generally increased. Therefore, people who have

completed 60 years are faced with various problems from family, physical, mental point of view and this has created many serious problems in the life of the elderly. The importance of this study is that the information about the problems faced by this study can be used to solve the problems of the elderly.

Analysis and interpretation:**Elderly population:**

Considering the population of India, the percentage of elderly population is analyzed through the following table. In general, the development of manpower, health facilities, diet and exercise, family conditions and social security in India after independence has resulted in an increase in the average life expectancy of the people, the result of which is a continuous increase in the number of elderly people. The analysis is done through the following table

. Table1.1. Elderly Population (aged 60 years & above) in India (in millions)(%)

Source	Total			Rural	Urban
	Persons	Female	Male		
Census 1961	24.7 (5.6%)	12.4 (5.8%)	12.4 (5.5%)	21.0 (5.8%)	3.7 (4.7%)
Census 1971	32.7 (6.0%)	15.8 (6.0%)	16.9 (5.9%)	27.3 (6.2%)	5.4 (5.0%)
Census 1981*	43.2 (6.5%)	21.1 (6.6%)	22.0 (6.4%)	34.7 (6.8%)	8.5 (5.4%)
Census 1991**	56.7 (6.8%)	27.3 (6.8%)	29.4 (6.7%)	44.3 (7.1%)	12.4 (5.7%)
Census2001***	76.6 (7.4%)	38.9 (7.8%)	37.8 (7.1%)	57.4 (7.7%)	19.2 (6.7%)
Census2011***	103.8 (8.6%)	52.8 (9.0%)	51.1 (8.2%)	73.8 (8.8%)	30.6 (8.1%)

Source: Population Census Data

* The 1981 Census could not be held in Assam owing to disturbed conditions. The population figures for 1981 of Assam were worked out by ‘interpolation’.

** The 1991 Census was not held in Jammu & Kashmir. The population figures

for 1991 of Jammu & Kashmir were worked out by ‘interpolation’.

*** The figures include the estimated population of Mao Maram, Paomata and Purul sub-divisions of Senapati district of Manipur.

Table1.2. Decadal growth in elderly population vis-à-vis that of general population (% change)

Period	in general population	in elderly population
1951-61	21.6	23.9
1961-71	24.8	33.7
1971-81*	24.7	33.0
1981*-91**	23.9	29.7
1991**- 2001***	21.5	25.2
2001*** - 2011***	17.7	35.5

Source: Population Census Data

* The 1981 Census could not be held in Assam owing to disturbed conditions. The population figures for 1981 of Assam were worked out by ‘interpolation’. ** The 1991 Census was not held in Jammu & Kashmir. The population figures for 1991 of Jammu & Kashmir were worked out by ‘interpolation’. *** The figures include the estimated population of Mao Maram, Paomata and Purul sub-divisions of Senapati district of Manipur.

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been analyzed through the above table. While studying the size of the elderly population according to the above various tables it can be collectively analyzed as follows.

According to Table No. 1.1 the number of elderly in the Indian population which was 24.7 million in 1961 increased to 76.6 million according to the 2001 census and 103.8 million according to the 2011 census. Today, if we look at 2024, we will see an increase in the total population and the elderly population. If we consider the number of elderly in the total population in table number 1.1, the population which was 5.6% in 1961 increased to 6.8% in 1991, increased to 7.4% in 2001 and as per 2011 census the same population increased to 8.6%. The population of matured persons i.e. the elderly is also seen to increase. While

taking the data of this table, census has not been conducted in some states due to some reason, so there is a discrepancy in the data. Therefore, if we analyze the population in general, due to the continuous increase in the average life expectancy, the total number of elderly people in the Indian population is found to be 8.6%.

According to Table No. 1.2, if we consider the population of old people in the general population, the growth of the general population was 21.6% during the decade 1951 to 61, while the growth of the old age population was 23.9%. If we consider the decade 1991 to 2001, the total population growth is 21.5% while the growth of the elderly population is 25.2%. Also, if we consider the decade 2001 to 2011, the total population has increased by 17.7% while the elderly population has increased by 35.5%. Every decade, India's total population typically grows at an average rate of seven to ten percent, and the elderly population grows at an average rate of eight to ten percent. which means that the population of elderly people is continuously increasing in the total population.

Problems of the elderly:

Physical problems:

Many physical problems arise in old age. In youth, if the body is not properly taken care of and addiction is not controlled, these problems take a severe form. Simple movements are annoying to them. They are unable to lift a heavy bag, climb stairs, cross the road, balance,

physical hygiene, diet, restrictions, pains of illness. Common cold, fever, cold, cough linger and increase. On the one hand, the average life expectancy of the elderly has increased due to drugs that overcome the disease, modern technology, restrictions on hospitals and illness etc.

Family problems:

Spending due to the illness of the elderly person, taking them to see the doctor, taking medicine, keeping the hospital, maintaining their care, health facilities, etc. It is opposed to spending on overall facilities. Many times it is thought that the elderly should do a business and work but they are not able to do it due to their physical and mental conditions, so they create problems in the family and as a result, the elderly feel a burden on the home. If we consider the urban society, small houses, insufficient means of employment make it difficult to take care of the elderly in the family. The elderly who live in the city go either to old age homes or orphanages, thus creating problems in their overall lives.

Financial problems:

A person cannot work hard in old age. Physical and mental labor cannot be done. People who work have to retire later due to age, after retirement those who get pension have to live their lives on pension but many times loans are taken from pension and provident fund for children's education, marriage and other family expenses. Also, they have to live their lives on the basis of family due to not

planning money properly while working and being cheated in many cases. Also, people who are farmers and general workers have to pay for their own health as there is no pension and no financial provision for their old age, they cannot ask for money from their family. If there is a general economic situation, then one's own health is neglected. At that time old people neglect their life due to their own financial crisis, they feel ashamed to ask for money from their family, so many problems arise in their life.

Mental problems:

If the elders in the house are sick, they do not have a place of honor in the house, the elders go into depression with the feeling that they are a burden to the house, they feel that their orders are being neglected, this worsens their mental condition. Many a times family members try to avoid them, give advice on behavior, advise them to stay aside if there is any event in the house. When they don't get the food they want, they become irritable. Due to this, old people have constant arguments with family members. This is due to the deterioration of the mental state and results in mental problems.

Security issues:

Elderly people face safety issues due to their physical incapacity. If there is an old couple in a house, they keep a sneaky eye on them, try to rob them, enter the house, beat them, try to steal the gold from their body. Also, if the elderly walk

on the road, their accident rate increases, no one is willing to help them. Elderly people have extreme jitters in their movements, balance difficulties, vision and hearing problems, making them prone to accidents. Due to this problems are seen from theft to physical accidents.

Solutions to Elderly Issues:

We briefly review the efforts being made through global programs, charitable organizations, government laws and schemes to address the issue of the elderly.

Functioning of Charitable Organizations:

In India, the systematic initiation of old age welfare programs began in the second half of the nineteenth century. Some charitable organizations started helping the elderly during this period. The Friend in Need Society, established in Bangalore in 1840, was the first such organization to work for the aged and disabled. Then in 1865, the organization 'David Sassoon Infirm Asylum' was established in Pune. Food, clothing and shelter were provided to the elderly through her. This organization is still helping the elderly under the name of 'Nivara'. The 'Little Sisters of the Poor' (1882), a Kolkata-based institution, provided shelter, clothing and medical care to the elderly. The same organization has established such service centers for the poor elderly in Chennai, Bangalore. Also set up in Secunderabad. 'Ashakt Ashram' was started in 1912 at Surat in Gujarat. 'Panchavati' Old Age Home was

started in Nagpur by MatrusevaSangh (1961). Help Age International, an organization under the United Nations, provides the rights and benefits of the elderly, meeting the basic needs of food, clothing, shelter, health, preservation of self-respect, rehabilitation etc. Valuable service has been done in this regard.

Senior Citizen Harassment Awareness Day:

Every year, June 15 is observed as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. There should be self-reflection about the abuse, oppression and torture of the elderly. The main purpose behind this day is to create social awareness to solve their problems, to lead a dignified and healthy life for the elderly, to get social and family security and to take preventive measures.

Government programs, laws and schemes:

The Central Government has passed the Welfare of Senior Citizens Act, 2007 for the welfare and welfare of parents and senior citizens. The said act has been implemented in the state of Maharashtra from 1st March, 2009. (Notification dated March 31, 2009) Under this Act, there is a provision to pay maintenance expenses (MAINTENANCE) to senior citizens from their children.

National Council for Older Persons:

The National Council for Older Persons (NCOP) was constituted in 1999 under the Chairpersonship of the Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment.

National Policy on Older Persons:

The National Policy on Older Persons was announced by the Government in January 1999 which envisages State support to ensure financial and food security, health care, shelter and other needs of older persons to improve the quality of their lives.

Central Sector Scheme of Integrated Programme for Older Persons:

An Integrated Programme for Older Persons (IPOP) is being implemented since 1992 with the objective of improving the quality of life of senior citizens.

Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme:

IGNOAPS was implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development under which Central assistance is given towards pension.

Income Tax Exemptions Income Tax:

Income tax exemption for Senior Citizens of 60 years and above by the Ministry of Finance.

Twelfth Five Year Plan and Senior Citizens:

The major focus in the Twelfth Plan will be the consolidation, expansion and strengthening of the various programmes into comprehensive coordinated system to fulfill the aspirations of these vulnerable sections of the society.

ShravanbalYojana (National Old Age Retirement Scheme):

Under this scheme, benefits are given to male and female senior citizens above 65 years of age. Under the scheme, Rs. 400/- from the state government and Rs. 200/- from the central government for a total of Rs. 600/- per month.

As above, we have taken a look at some of the prominent aspects of efforts being made at the government and social level to solve the problems of the elderly through NGOs, government programs and laws.

Conclusion:

According to the 'World Bank' and 'UN Population', in the next 23 years after 2023, people in India will live an average of 75 years, while the number of children in the family will decrease drastically. The impact of all these on the elderly will be severe. The idea of not only raising, protecting and maintaining the elderly for social cohesion and conservation, but also their right to lead a life with self-respect was proclaimed in the United Nations General Assembly on 3rd December 1982. Due to this, the issues of the elderly gained global importance and priority.

Earlier, the elderly were accommodated in the joint family system. Now the joint family system is broken due to small space, limited family size, changing jobs, living abroad in the nuclear family system. Senior citizens were the biggest losers. In order to strengthen family institutions, create awareness in the society and implement effective change policies by the

government to fulfill its responsibilities, for the elderly feel trapped in their homes.

- 1) Financial security of seniors.
- 2) Health care and insurance coverage.
- 3) Secure accommodation.
- 4) Acceptance and respectful behavior from the family.
- 5) Recreation centers and libraries in rural as well as urban areas.
- 6) Proper arrangement of old age home.
- 7) Adequate financial assistance scheme with respect.
- 8) Laws for Protection from Harassment, Humiliation.
- 9) Schemes should be implemented immediately to raise the standard of living of senior citizens by providing them with economic stability by providing them with employment.

The Central Government promulgated the Senior Citizens Charity and Welfare Act in 2007 and framed its rules in 2010. However, that law has not had the desired effect. This is the first law for the elderly in India. However, its implementation has not been as desired at various levels.

In Indian culture, the mentality of elders will not allow the time to take legal action against children. For that, senior citizen organizations, social organizations should decide the direction of their work, to get the love of the family to such senior citizens, to treat each other with love so that they also feel wanted in the family, extend a hand of help so that they can also regain their dignity. The organization should also take up the problems of lonely old people.

For the rest of the seniors' life to be happy, satisfied, healthy, free and peaceful, the path of love and not the law is useful. For this, every element of the society needs to make an effort.

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