

## ELDER ABUSE: A GREAT CONCERN FOR ELDERLY PEOPLE LIVING IN OLD AGE HOMES

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### Abstract

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*Elder Abuse is not new phenomena for present society. If one studies the ancient societies; one will find the elder abuse happened in every era. Elder abuse is arising as a curse for every Elderly today. The Elderly presents special and unique problems and these have been aggravated due to the unprecedented speed of socio-economic transformation leading to a number of changes in different aspect of living conditions. Elder abuse is the likely acute and chronic stressors affecting social and behavioral mediators of the elderly. Currently in India 50% of the elderly population epitomizes the oppressed in which 48% are male and 53% are women (HelpAge India Report, 2014). The objective of the study is to study the status of Elder abuse and to present the suggestions for solving the problems of Elder abuse.*

**Methods and materials:** *In the present study Descriptive research design was used. The paper is based on primary data and focused on problems of elder abuse of Elderly people. The study was conducted in Lucknow city where four old age homes have been selected. For this study Lottery Method of Random Sampling was used to select 71 respondents as sample size. The data have been collected by using the Interview Schedule. Findings of the study show that the problems of Elder abuse at the present is very quiet depressing and pathetic. Currently, an elderly person has suffered from these problems at large levels which were critical to discuss the above study. In present, the problem of elder abuse is increasing day by day.*

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**Key words:** *Elder abuse, old age home.*



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## **Introduction:**

In India, like in many other parts of the world, the number of elderly people (60 + years and older) is steadily increasing. Along with this trend, there is a very realistic fear that safety, dignity and quality of life of elders may get compromised. The reported figures of prevalence may vary; but, there is no doubt that violence against elders is on the rise.

Elder abuse refers to actions that harm an older person or negatively affects his/her wellbeing. Preventive elder abuse is one of the key concerns for service providers and organizations that support elderly. While, no one age group is really safe from abuse and violence, older adults may be vulnerable due to a combination of factors that is personal, familial, economical, psychological and social. Therefore, understanding the complexity of abuse is the first step to addressing the problem effectively. Creating awareness among all stakeholders is a very important initiative in dealing with this issue (Prakash, 2013).

A world health organization document defines Elder abuse as “a single, or repeated act, or lack appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person” (Prakash, 2013).

Elders Abuse reduces the quality of life of elderly people drastically and is a basic violation of their human rights. The most common way of classifying different types of abuse are- Physical abuse, verbal, emotional or psychological abuse, sexual abuse, Financial abuse and exploitation, medication abuse, caregiver neglect and self-neglect.

HelpAge India Surveys (2018) on Elder Abuse was conducted in 23 cities of India by interviewing elderly above 60 years of age. This study aims to understand the spread, type and extent of Elder Abuse in India, Impact of Social Media & Technology, and Awareness of elders on Redressal Measures in Tier-1 & Tier-2 cities across 23 States/ UTs in India. The target group included male and female elder aged 60 years and above belonging to SEC category B/C and D.

The study covered 5014 elders across 23 cities, in which more than 70% aged 60-69 years with almost equal distribution of both gender. Around 60% elders confirmed that Elder Abuse is prevalent in our society. Of those, who reported prevalence, 88% of them believed its existence is high. Nearly one-fourth (25%) elders have confirmed they have been victim of Elder Abuse ever with no gender variation. The most common form of abuse they experienced was disrespect (56%), verbal abuse (49%) and neglect (33%). The main abusers were Son (57%) and Daughter-in-law (38%). Only 18% elders have confirmed that they have

made an attempt to report abuse. And, only 35% of the total reporting was successfully resolved. Around 11% were aware of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007 (MWPSA) Act, while 5% were aware of HelpAge Elder Helpline number. More than 60% elderly agreed that quality time spent by their adult children as well grandchildren with them has decreased with increase in usage of phones/computers. 65% elderly stated that extreme attention given to phones/ computers is disrespectful.

**Objectives of the study:** The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To Study the status of Elder abuse.
2. To present the suggestions for solving the problems of Elder abuse.

**Research Methodology:** In the present study Descriptive research design was used. The paper is based on primary data and focused on problems of elder abuse of Elderly people. The study was conducted in Lucknow city where four old age homes have been selected. For this study Lottery Method of Random Sampling was used to select 71 respondents as sample size. The data have been collected by using the Interview Schedule.

**Results and Discussion:**

**Table No.1: Age wise distribution of respondents**

| Age (in years)                     | No. of respondents | Percentage    |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| 60-65                              | 05                 | 7.04          |
| 65-70                              | 14                 | 19.71         |
| 70-75                              | 17                 | 23.94         |
| 75-80                              | 17                 | 23.94         |
| <b>80 years and 80 years above</b> | <b>18</b>          | <b>25.35</b>  |
| <b>Total</b>                       | <b>71</b>          | <b>100.00</b> |

Table no. 1 reveals that maximum percentage i.e. 25.35% respondents belong to age group of 80 year and 80 years above, 23.94% were in the age group of 75-80 years, 23.94% were also in the age group of 70-75 years. 19.71% were in the age group of 65-70 years and 7.4% in the age group of 60-65 years. The data shows that majority percentage of the respondents were in the age group of 80 years and 80 years above. The old age population has been increased in last four-five decades in India as a result of medical advancement, improvements & availability in nutrition system and rapid economic development. These cumulatively increased the life expectancy index comparatively. Generally, age of 60 year or

above is considered as old age. This makes clear that people living in old age home were in the last stage of their life.

**Table No.2: Sex wise distribution of respondents**

| Sex           | No. of respondents | Percentage   |
|---------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Male          | 24                 | 33.80        |
| <b>Female</b> | <b>47</b>          | <b>66.19</b> |
| <b>Total</b>  | 71                 | 100.00       |

Table no. 2 Shows that the majority of the respondents were female and male respondents were less in number. Thus, it is clear that the numbers of women living in old age home were more than male. At the present time, old age population is 8.3% of the total population in which 8.2% are male and 9.0% are female (Census, 2011). The data also indicate the Census tendency.

**Table No.3: Literacy levels of respondents**

| Levels       | No. of respondents | Percentage |
|--------------|--------------------|------------|
| Literate     | 52                 | 73.23      |
| Illiterate   | 19                 | 26.76      |
| <b>Total</b> | 71                 | 100.00     |

While studying the socio-economic status of the elderly people, the level of education of elderly people was analyzed. Table no. 3 shows large numbers of respondents were literate and some of the respondents were illiterate. Facts of the study show that most of the respondents of old age home were literate and they belonged to upper class society. They were more concerned and aware about their self-respect & daily needs.

**Table No. 4: Status of elder abuse of respondents**

| Status       | No. of respondents | Percentage |
|--------------|--------------------|------------|
| Yes          | 36                 | 50.70      |
| No           | 35                 | 49.29      |
| <b>Total</b> | 71                 | 100.00     |

Elder abuse is deliberately causing physical, emotional/psychological, sexual or financial harm to an older adult who is under one's care. Elder abuse reduces the quality of life of elderly people drastically and it a basic violation of human rights. (Sharma, 2009) Table no. 5 shows large numbers of respondents had been abused. Under Elder abuse, neglect of food, financial exploitation (material abuse), deprivation of attention (neglect of physical

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needs), deprivation of affection (emotional needs), derogatory verbal remarks, confinement (physical isolation), physical violence, loud talking and legal abuse etc. have been treated with older persons. Thus, it clear from the study that nearly more than half of the respondents were abused in some way or the other. Sense of the respect to old age people is decreasing day by day in the family. Family member considered them as burden. They are being expelled from their home & forced to take shelter in old age homes.

**Table No. 5: Status of elder abuse of respondents by their relatives**

| Status                    | No. of respondents | Percentage    |
|---------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| By Sons                   | 12                 | 33.33         |
| <b>By Daughter in law</b> | <b>15</b>          | <b>41.66</b>  |
| By Daughters              | 03                 | 8.33          |
| By Brothers               | 02                 | 5.55          |
| Others                    | 04                 | 11.11         |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>36</b>          | <b>100.00</b> |

Table no. 5.1 shows large numbers of aged 41.66% were abused by their daughter in law and 33.33% by their sons. 8.33% Respondents were abused by their daughters and 5.55% by their brother. The elder abuse done by relatives is made clear in the table 5. In the study, most of the respondents accepted that they were abused by their daughter-in-laws and also by their sons, daughters, brothers and other relatives. Respondents told that they were abused in various ways, beaten; mistreated; verbal abuse; not taken care in their sickness; family members take them as burden so they don't fulfill their daily needs; and even sometimes they were expelled from their home. In this case, they are compelled to take shelter in old age homes. Thus, it is evident that most of the respondents were abused by the daughter-in-laws and other family members including their daughters as well.

**Table No. 5.1: Levels of respect of children with respondents**

| Levels       | No. of respondents | Percentage    |
|--------------|--------------------|---------------|
| <b>Agree</b> | <b>29</b>          | <b>40.84</b>  |
| Disagree     | 27                 | 38.02         |
| No Answer    | 15                 | 21.12         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>71</b>          | <b>100.00</b> |

It is clear from Table 5.1 that Maximum respondents agree that their children do not give them proper respect, while some respondents believe that their children respect them.

There were also some respondents in the study who resigned to give any response in the context. From the above analysis it is inferred that what amount of respect and love aged people used to get earlier from their children, has been declining with each passing day. They are neglected by their children and so is the condition of their opinion.

**Table No. 6: Status of the Respondent’s grievances to help their family**

| Status       | No. of respondents | Percentage |
|--------------|--------------------|------------|
| Agree        | 44                 | 61.97      |
| Disagree     | 13                 | 18.30      |
| No Answer    | 14                 | 19.71      |
| <b>Total</b> | 71                 | 100.00     |

It is clear from the Table No. 7 that the most number of respondents are agreed on the point that their family members don’t help them in the hour of need, sickness, and they feel helplessness in those conditions, while only a few respondents are agreed on the point that their family members help them in the hour of their need. There were also some respondents in the study who refuse to give any opinion on the same. From the above analysis, it is inferred that a large number of aged people are suffering and facing the problems related to health care, negligence, and indifferent attitude of their children toward them, deprived of daily need and financial support. Due to such behaviors they feel helplessness. Being deprived of everything and even with their relations, they have only feeling that no one can help them in all those happening of their lives.

**Other Findings:**

- The maximum number of respondents (97.18) is from nucleus family and the number of respondents having joint family background is very less. Each respondent accepted that they are not asked to give any opinion in family affairs or their opinions are not given any value in family affairs and other distinct cases. They don’t play any role in decision making of the family.
- There is maximum number of participants (56.33%) are not contented with their social status, and among unsatisfied participants, the reasons for not being satisfied, the highest (61.29 percent) respondents said that they were outcast and forced to stay in the old age homes due to which they are not satisfied with their social status.
- The highest 36.61 percent respondents said that due to their economic side weakening, they have no respect in family and society, and the most 44.29 percent

respondents say that they depend on old age homes for their daily basic needs.

**Conclusion:**

At the present time, the increasing misbehavior and oppression of the elderly is not only painful, but also it is exposing the truth of civil society where elderly is suffering in the present and afraid of his future.

It is evident from the findings of the study that most of the elderly are suffering from elder abuse. They are being tortured with physical, mental, economic, and verbal forms. Most of the elderly are being oppressed by their son and daughter-in-law. They do not get any respect and love from family or society and they are victims of neglect. In this way, the socio-economic status of the elderly is extremely disappointing and miserable.

**Suggestions:**

1. Firstly, we should focus on those laws and acts which have been made for the wellbeing of elderly people. There is wide need of awareness campaigning to make people aware about these laws and also need to ensure that those provisions are strictly followed.
2. Children should've sense of respect to their parents and elders. For the development of sense of respect among children, there is need of revision and inclusion of stories of morality & good traits in the curriculum at primarily level.
3. Nowadays events of elder abuse are increasing. To reduce such incidents both government and non-government efforts are needed. Non-government organizations should organize awareness camps, workshops and seminars at community level.
4. For the self-employment of elderly people, there is a need of vocational training at national, regional and local level so that they may become independent. In this way, being self-dependent they can fulfill their basic needs.
5. Government should establish an elder cell in every police station, so that elderly people lodge their complaints there easily and also there is need to made provisions for ensuring the quick redressed of complaints. As well as one elder help line should be started at each elder cell.
6. To support the elderly, facilities like child line should be arranged at national level, from which basic facilities can reach to the elderly of the disadvantaged sections.

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