



ABUSE OF ELDERLY IN GUNTUR DISTRICT OF ANDHRA PRADESH CHALLENGES AND SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

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ABSTRACT

One of the striking features of demographic transition in the world has been the significant increase in the absolute and relative numbers of elderly people. Falling mortality has meant improving life expectancies and an increasing proportion of older people in the population. The protruding vertex of population pyramid of India is evincing the significant increase in elderly population over a few decades. As a matter of concern, the country is facing by the elderly population, a non-working and ill health population, is second highest in the world. The competence to delay death through medical advancement and increasing education has resulted into improved life expectancy resulting into protruding vertex. The speedily ageing population in India is witnessing new challenges. Help Age India conducted a survey in 23 major cities of India in 2018. 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. The causes of abuse of older people are complex and multifaceted, and may encompass physical, psychological, social, medical, legal and environmental factors and multiple systems. Elder abuse is a complex phenomenon that results from several different causes, and that often has roots in multiple factors. Older women are mainly at risk of financial abuse, physical abuse, and sexual abuse. Through scenario has changed in recent times, it is evident in history of India that by and large women were not encouraged to seek education and become independent. This led to women remain illiterate and could not produce any monetary livelihood for herself. Work contribution that would generate income was not also nor acceptable in Indian society rather were they restricted to perform household chores only. Such implications made women to depend upon their husband for all kinds of needs especially financial support. After death of spouse, she expects the same monetary support from her son. In long run, such financial dependence turns futile and become abusive. Therefore the present paper explores Abuse of Elderly in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh and further lays an emphasis on Challenges and Strategies.

Keywords : Elderly, Abuse, Social Work, Intervention, Challenges, Strategies

INTRODUCTION

Elder abuse is a human right defilement affecting millions of older people worldwide. It is an increasing and alarming public health issue with devastating consequences for the victims and society including increased risk of morbidity, mortality, institutionalization, loss of productivity, isolation and despair (M. W. Baker, 2007, Dong & Simon, 2013, Lachs, Williams, O'Brien, Pillemer, & Charlson, 1998). The magnitude of the problem is challenging to determine due to varying definitions and social norms across the world (P. R. A. Baker, Francis, Hairi, Othman, & Choo, 2016). A systematic review based on 52 studies conducted in 28 countries with 12 low and middle income countries estimated that 15.7% of people aged 60 years and older were subjected to some form of abuse (Yon, Mikton, Gassoumis, & Wilber, 2017). The world is on the threshold of a demographic landmark. The demographic shift in the population towards the elderly has given rise to fears that abuse of older persons may grow in its incidence, prevalence and complexity. At the same time, elder abuse is hidden and often remains a taboo for many older persons in society. Older persons keep silent beside this violence in a domestic setting because of fear of exposing a family member losing services or being placed in a nursing home against their will.

As of 2011, India is a country with a population of 1.21 billion people. It is the second most populous country in the world, only to China. In 1997, the number of people aged 60 years and above, was 63.64 million. As of March 1, 2012, the projected number stands at 98.5 million. The number of "elder" people in India (60+ years) has increased by 54.77% in the last 15 years. In comparison, the working population (15-59 years of age) grew from 532.6 million to 758.61 million during the same time period, increasing by 42.34% in the last 15 years. As of March 1, 2012, the old age dependency ratio, which measures the number of elderly people as a portion of those of working age, stands at 0.13. By 2050, India's old age dependency ratio is projected to cross over 0.20.

DEFINITION

The Oxford Dictionary (2006) defines abuse as treatment with cruelty or violence, for a bad purpose, addressing in an insulting and offensive way. Other dictionaries, for instance, Webster's include in the meaning of abuse also reproach, to disparage a person in the most violent terms, to take unfair or undue advantage of, to injure, hurt and damage and treat without consideration or fairness, to be physically harmful and maltreat. Clearly, the ever present face of violence, overt and covert, physical and non-physical, generally associated with abuse of women and children. Now also has overwhelming influence on our understanding of abuse of older people.

Elder Abuse has been defined as a single, or repetitive act, or lack of suitable action occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person. That the Government of India has had to pass a legislation regarding this (Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizen Act, 2007) serves testimony to the degeneration of the respect and reverence attached to our elders, that was once second nature to all of us in India.

HOW IS ELDER ABUSE DEFINED?

Several definitions of elder abuse exist in the literature. It becomes difficult to understand the term elder abuse in the absence of any precise definition. There is also inconsistency in using these terms across the studies because some researchers used the term elder abuse and neglect, whereas others used the term mistreatment (Hoover & Poison, 2014).

Elder abuse was first described in British Scientific Journals in 1975 under the term "granny battering" (Burston, 1975) (A. Baker, 1978). The best prevailing definition of elder abuse (WHO definition) is "a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person and typically encompasses six types of abuse: physical abuse, caregiver neglect, financial exploitation, psychological abuse and sexual abuse which was included in the Toronto Declaration on elder abuse (Roberto & Teaster, 2017).

National Centre on Elder Abuse in the United States of America defined elder abuse as "any abuse and neglect of persons age sixty and older by a caregiver or another person in a relationship involving an expectation of trust". The violation of a trust relationship is explicitly identified as a defining feature of elder abuse. The behavior is termed abusive, which will depend on how frequently the mistreatment occurs, its duration, severity and consequences, and above all, the cultural context. Culture has a vital role in the perception of various types of elder abuse; Americans found physical abuse to be more offensive, whereas Koreans found psychological abuse as more offensive (Malley-Morrison, You, & Mills, 2000).

Elder abuse is considered a multi-faceted phenomenon. Hence, all definitions of elder abuse have paid attention to multiple aspects: the types of abuse (e.g. physical, psychological, neglect, financial, sexual abuse and violation of personal rights), who does the abusing (perpetrator descriptions), who suffers the abuse (victim descriptions), the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator (mutual trust and dependency of the victim), the intention (intentional or unintentional), whether the mistreatment may be an act of commission (abuse) or omission (neglect) and where it happens (e.g., in domestic settings or institutional settings).

National Centre on Elder abuse (2015) classifies the major types of elder abuse as physical, sexual, psychological, financial, and neglect. Physical abuse is any use of physical force that results in physical injury, pain, or impairment. It includes hitting, beating, pushing, shoving, shaking, slapping, kicking, pinching, burning, inappropriate use of drugs, physical restraints, force-feeding and physical punishment of any kind.

Psychological/Emotional abuse is defined as the infliction of anguish, pain, or distress through verbal or non-verbal acts. It includes verbal assaults, insults, threats, intimidation, humiliation, harassment, treating an older person like an infant, isolating an older person from his/her family or friends, giving silent treatment to an older person and enforced social isolation.

Financial/Material exploitation is defined as the illegal or improper use of an elder's funds, assets or property. It consists of cashing an older person's bank cheque without permission, forging an older person's signature, misusing or stealing an older person's money or possessions, coercing or deceiving an older person into signing any document.

Neglect is defined as the refusal or failure to fulfil any part of a person's obligations or duties to an elder. Neglect means the refusal or failure to provide an older person with such life necessities as food, water, clothing, shelter, personal hygiene, medicine, comfort, personal safety and other essentials.

Based on certain studies on elder abuse conducted in India UN Secretary General in the Report presented at the Second World Assembly (United Nations, 2002) revealed that in a sample of 1,000 older persons, 4% claimed to be physically abused and in another smaller sample of 50 persons aged 70 years and over living in an urban area, 20% said they had been neglected in their households. There are estimates that elder abuse in India, in all communities and across all sections of the society, is on the rise. Increasing media coverage, stories filed by journalists (Verma, 1996; Mitra, 1998; Paul, 1998), newspaper clippings (Menon, 1998; Martyris, 1999; Mehta, 2000; Sharma, 2001; Sang wan, 2004; Shoma, 2004; Hindustan Times Metro, 2006; Gomes, 2006; Choks, 2008), T. V. coverage in serials, discussions and news, films, literary stories, some published autobiographical account, small scale qualitative studies (Mahajan, A., 1992; Vaithi, 1996; Bambawale, 1997; Prasad, 1997; Shankardass, 1997; 2002, 2004; Ushasree&Basha, 1999), and NGO activities (F.N.1) directed towards addressing the multitude of issues related to the abuse, all depict abuse of older persons in some form or the other.

There is also now increasing sign from crime records and court proceedings which indicate that elder abuse is no longer a hushed affair. Older people who because of question of family shame and regard for their adult children were earlier suffering in silence are gradually coming out in the public with their 'horror and disgraceful' stories, their loss of dignity. For instance, Senior's Cell at police Headquarters in Delhi in June 2007 reported to be on a daily contact with 50 senior citizens through their helpline and analysis of distress calls made by older people in 2006 and half year of 2007 revealed 4% complains related to property and tenantdispute, 7% to harassment by other people other than family, 39% complained of family disputes, 7% sought police assistance, 12% complained of public nuisance in neighborhood, 2% had problems with civic agencies and the rest were termed as miscellaneous (Singh, 2007). An a analysis of actual complaints received at the Cell indicated 43% older people having disputes with family members, 11% with neighbors, and other 11% were threatened or harassed by others, 4% complained about being cheated, while another 4% complained about disputes with tenants or landlord and 8% had property disputes with others. 8% had complained about problems with authorities and 8% complains were termed as miscellaneous, while 2% were against police assistance.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The problem of elder abuse is going to be more serious in future in view of the changing demography of the elderly population and the policy implications it has for the care of the elderly in the family and community. However till date in India. Research on aging was primarily confined to socio-demographic profiles, problems of caring and services to the aged. Interpersonal relationships and so on. As a result certain areas such as elder abuse suffered neglect under research. Therefore, there is a need for empirical studies on elderly abuse women

in India to provide information about the problem of abuse and neglect of the elderly to guide practitioners, policy makers and planners to solve this problem. Keeping these aspects in view, the present research was undertaken to explore the patterns of abuse and neglect of the elderly family in the Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To Study socio-economic and demographic profile of abused aged respondents in the study area.
2. To Study problems of abused Elderly respondents in the study area.
3. To suggest appropriate measures for the eradication of the problem of elderly abuse.

Research Design: Exploratory and Descriptive Research Designs will be adopted to study the problem of Elderly abuse, the extent of Elderly abuse, and causative factors for Elderly abuse in the study.

Study Area: Mangalagiri Mandal of Guntur District in Andhra Pradesh has been selected for the study. Sample from four villages in the Mangalagiri Mandal jurisdiction are considered as rural areas and samples from Mangalagiri town are considered as the urban area for the study.

Selection of the sampling: Thus a total sample of 300 (150 males, 150 females) will be selected for the study by using the convenience sampling method through baseline surveys.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

GENDER-WISE ANALYSIS OF ELDERLY ABUSED

To identify the Gender-wise profile of the elderly people, the collected data was analysed and presented in the following table.

Table-1
Gender-wise analysis of Elderly Abused

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	150	50.00
Female	150	50.00
Total	300	100.00

The above table shows that 50% of elderly abused are male and 50% are females. This indicates an inter-generational cycle of older people and poverty. An equal number of males and females participated in the study so that nature, frequency, intensity, and reasons, related to males and females can be studied broadly. As India increases its population every year the number of older people also increases. The sample consisted of 300 populations (150 men and 150 women) living with their families in a community belonging to the middle socio-economic class family background.

AGE-WISE ANALYSIS OF ELDERLY ABUSED

To identify the age-wise profile of the elderly people, the collected data was analysed and presented in the following table.

Table-2
Age-wise analysis of Elderly Abused

Age (in Years)	Frequency	Percentage
60 to 65	96	32.0
66 to 70	91	30.3
71 to 75	78	26.0
76 and above	35	11.7
Total	300	100.0

The table clearly shows that 62.3% of elderly abused are aged between 60 to 70 years, and the remaining 37.7% belong to the age group 71 years and above. This implies that elderly people are having some problems. Among the 37.7%, the elderly abused belong to the 75+ age group 11.7% and it is not agreed be less, which can be explained by the fact that they have facing elder mistreatment, and people who are unable to work (because of old age or other problems related to age such as chronic diseases) have to face them as to be a burden for the

family. The life of People of the elderly abused in the villages of the marginalized is so tough and even the same appeared in the urban areas though they have expensive health, security, and protection.

COMMUNITY-WISE ANALYSIS OF THE ELDERLY ABUSED

The data collected from the elderly abused were segregated according to their community and presented in the following table.

Table-3
Community-wise analysis of the Elderly Abused

Community	Frequency	Percentage
Open (General) Category (OC)	164	54.7
Backward Community/OBC	77	25.7
Scheduled Caste (SC)	34	11.3
Scheduled Tribe (ST)	13	4.3
Minority	12	4.0
Total	300	100.0

According to the Census 2011, the elderly abused population in India is 104 million (60+ years), consisting of 8.6% of the total population. Whereas in Andhra Pradesh 82, 78,241 older people (60+ years), consist 9.78% of the total population. In our study, we make a conscious effort to segregate the caste-wise data of the elderly abused population. However, no caste-wise breakup of Elderly abused census data was found in MangalagiriMandal.

The findings reveal that there are 25.7% BC/OBC, 11.3% SC, 4.3% ST and 4% Minorities among the elderly abused population surveyed. It shows that 45.3% of the elderly abused population is a reserved category and 54.7% belongs to the open/general caste. This demonstrates that most of the disadvantaged communities are deprived of basic human rights and lives in extremely vulnerable condition. Apart from economic factors, social factors such as discrimination and stigma faced in native villages could be a reason for elder are not move along with their children and staying at their place. The caste identities of the people also become a huge factor in migration to cities, where the people perceive themselves to be relatively more secure in this regard.

RELIGION WISE ANALYSIS OF ELDERLY ABUSED

The collected data was analysed on the religion of the sample and presented in the following table.

Table-4
Religion-wise analysis of the Elderly Abused

Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Hindu	198	66.0
Christian	67	22.3
Muslim	35	11.7
Total	300	100.0

An overwhelming majority (66%) of the elderly abused population in rural and urban areas of the Mangalagiri Mandal are Hindus; whereas 22.3% are Christian and 11.7% are Muslim. It shows that the Hindu population of elderly abused belongs to the state and other minority groups like Muslims and Christians hailed from other parts of the country and a very negligible percentage may be from the states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. From the table, it found that the Christian community is more than the Muslim community of elderly abused has more in Mangalagiri Mandal.

LITERACY WISE ANALYSIS OF THE PEOPLE ELDERLY ABUSED

The investigator pooled the data and distributed the sample group of the elderly abuse population in terms of their literacy status and presented it in the following table.

Table-5
Literacy-wise analysis of the Elderly Abused

Literacy Status	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	137	45.7
up to class 5	94	31.3
6 th to 10 th class	56	18.7
college education or Diploma	5	1.7
Higher education	8	2.6
Total	300	100.0

The above table highlights that 54.3% of the elderly abused population is literate. Out of the total sample, 45.7% are illiterate, and 31.3% of the elderly abused are studied up to class 5; 18.7% are between class 6th to 10th. It's also found that 1.7% of the population are completed a college education or Diploma, and 2.6% are completed higher education.

OCCUPATION OF THE ELDERLY ABUSED

The Researcher wants to know the sample of the elderly abused people in terms of their occupation, the data was collected, analysed, and presented below.

Table-6
Occupation of the Elderly Abused

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Casual worker or Skilled worker	114	38.0
Self-employee or employer	87	29.0
Working in a private job	54	18.0
Retired Govt. Employee	10	3.3
Not working due to ill health	29	9.7
Do not do any work or do domestic work	6	2.0
Total	300	100.00

Table 6.6 indicates that 38% of the elderly abused population are working as casual workers or skilled workers; 29% are managing themselves as self-employed or employer; 18% are doing jobs in a private organization; 3.3% are retired from government service; 9.7% are presently not doing any work due to their ill health; and 2% are don't engage any type of above-mentioned works and just they are doing domestic work because of isolate or other reason.

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF THE ELDERLY ABUSED

The investigator wants to know to describe clearly the living arrangements and profile of the sample group of the elderly abused population and presented the collected data in the following table.

Table-7
Living arrangements of the Elderly Abused

Living Arrangement	Frequency	Percentage
Alone	54	18.0
With Spouse only	64	21.3
With family members	62	20.7
With relatives	36	12.0
With friends or unknown persons	84	28.0
Total	300	100.00

The above table accentuates that 18% responded that they are living alone; 21.3% are living with a spouse only; 20.7% are staying with family members. Besides 12% of the People of the elderly abused population are living with their relatives but not with any members, and 28% of them are living with their friends or unknown relatives. This information when matched with table 6.7, is even married and alone older people also residing either with their family members or close relatives or with friends.

RESPONSES OF THE ELDERLY ABUSED ON WHO ABUSED YOU MORE?

In general, the elderly population is facing abuse from family members or relatives in one or another situation due to cultural and societal changes occurring in the society. Due to that young generation are not caring the old generation. To know whether it may be a reason for the abuse or not, the investigator collected the information on the statement, and the data were segregated according to their responses and presented in the given table.

Table-8
Responses of the elderly abused who abused you more?

People who abused you more	Frequency	Percentage
Spouse	119	39.7
Children/ Daughter in Law or Son in Law	91	30.3
Grandchildren	48	16.0
Relatives	14	4.7
Co-workers	4	1.3
Friends or Neighbours	11	3.7
Caregivers or Help providers	5	1.7
Strangers	4	1.3
Others	4	1.3
Total	300	100.00

From the above table, it is observed that 39.7% of the elderly abused population of the sample group got abused by their life partner either in one way or another as in the cases of family matters. On the same side, 30.3% responded that the abuse was caused by their Children (son or daughter) or Daughter in Laws or Son in Laws who are staying along with them due to not having support from their spouse. 16 % of the respondents felt that their grandchildren treated them like they do not know anything or their behavior is not supported them or sometimes they scold them in terms of abusive language.

SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTIONS:

There is a lot of scope to work with the aged population in the society. The major areas are

1. Provide basic facilities for the senior citizens living in rural and also urban areas by appointing the health volunteers and health workers
2. Healthcare facilities should be provided to the senior citizens of rural areas and also in urban areas.
3. The depressed senior citizens required regular compensation to share their joys and sorrows.
4. Senior citizen associations help them for recreation and provide support in various areas like psychological, health and cultural programmes.
5. The senior citizens' associations are providing the training to senior citizens to use minimum technology to interact with their migrated children.
6. Developing and strengthening mobile healthcare systems for sick elderly. Health on wheels programmes helps them and reaches them at their door steps.
7. Running an awareness campaign for the aged
8. Creating awareness about suitable eating habits
9. Admit the elderly in government short stay homes and further rehabilitate and integrate them in their families.
10. The National Old Age Pension Scheme needs reforms in its philosophy as well as machinery. Here, the social workers may act as a bridge between government schemes and the needy, aged by creating awareness and helping them in advocacy programme related to availing this scheme.

All the social work methods like case work, group work, community organization and social action will be helpful to provide the services to the aged population. The social workers should increase the research on

different issues of senior citizens and promote the social welfare administration by building the network with the government and non-governmental organizations. The social work course should start a specialization to work with elderly. However, research and practice experience leads us to conclude that social workers with older people require a strong foundation of the core, generic social work skills and values, on which specialist knowledge and skills can build.

CONCLUSION

Only good family ties and interpersonal relationship should reduce the problems elder abuse in the families. The younger generations should realize the need for loving and caring the aged parents in their family itself. Only if the younger generations get proper guidance of the problems and needs of the old people, then they will be able to give more love and care to their elder members in the family. Thus elder abuse in the family can be controlled and be minimized. The real solutions are not new laws and provisions; the real solution lies with the people themselves. If they start treating the old aged people as if they deserve to be treated with respect and love, then this problem will cease to exist. The Government of India is moving towards Skill India, Health India, and Fit India programmes as well as welfare schemes promoting the public in the country. The government of India and its states also thought to bring 100 percent and ensure that no elderly people are left behind.

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