

DEPRIVED FEMALE ELDERLY AND GOVT. STRATEGIES : A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT:

Demographic trends indicate that the number of older females have been increasing dramatically each year. Consequently, there is a growing economically and socially deprived older population. Elderly women suffers as she is female as well as old. The sex ratio of the elderly was 938 women to 1000 men in 1971 which was increased to 1033 in 2011 and further increase by ageing women, frequently exaggerated by widowhood and complete dependency. Old women experience isolation destitution, financial and emotional insecurity.

Keywords: Socially, Economically, Discrimination, Elderly, female.

"Age is aging" describes the continuous, natural and inevitable process of growing older, that is characterized by changes in physical activities, psychological and social over time. The biological process of deterioration with age. Aging is a natural condition not a disease, though it brings with it challenges not only for older people and their families but for societies as a whole.

Population aging refers to the increase in number and percentage of older population aged 60 years and above and at the same time, decreasing in number and percentage of the younger population and 15 years old and below. Due to modern health facilities population of elderly has now become a distinctive demographic phenomena. Currently, developing countries have become the home for the largest proportion of older people in the world. The deadly diseases to be cured and reduced death rates in most nations of the world.

India, the largest democracy of the world and second most populous country is now also emerging as the sixth largest economy in the world. There are around 104 millions elderly persons (8.6%) census (2011) and the number is expected to increase 296.6 million constituting 20% of the total population by 2050.

Alone in the crowd, surrounded by youth and beauty elderly women living in metropolitan cities are more likely to feel socially alienated than their rural counterparts by 2050, women over 60 years would exceed the number of elderly men by 184 million which would result in a unique characteristic of 'feminization' of the elderly population in India as is being experienced (The Hindu; 2016).

The world's population is living longer and growing older. Embracing and planning for this massive demographic transition in one of the greatest social challenges of the 21st century in India, the loss of financial security is deeply witnessed with 40% of elderly being in the poorest wealth quartile while about one fifth have no income at all.

Socio- cultural mindsets and norms that labels the elderly as a lack of comprehensive safety nets increase the vulnerability of older individual manifold It is important to highlight that the unique phenomena of feminization and realization places further strain for the elderly population.

Gender concerns: It is important to realize that there is feminization of the elderly population and 51% of the elderly population are women by the year 2016 (Vardhan, 2017).

There are powerful economic, social, political and cultural determinants with for reaching consequences for health and quality of life as well as costs to the health care systems. Women suffer a dual vulnerability. Firstly female that she is victim of discrimination from her early childhood (Arora, 1997). Now her age is also the very cause of vulnerability, thirdly informal small scale sector that is chunk of 80% Majority of women do not have retirement benefits.

Khan et.al (1996) who studied widows in rural Tamil Nadu opine that an aged widow because she is aged, at that stage where most of them are subject to social and economic marginalization and are victimized by their own families and society at large. Aged widows feel depressed on being isolated. Due to globalization there is Shift of activity form unorganized sector to formal sector. Their results in loss of livelihood option for female mainly as 80% of the workforce is engaged in informal sector.

Majority of the women aged experience financial problems as they are not in a position to earn their livelihood. Most insurance companies shy away from insuring women, especially those who are in informal sector of work.

Due to overseas migration the aged parents having living arrangement in a very alienated lives. The parents now in their seventies once travelled overseas to visit their children. However, with age and health concern such travels has become increasingly full of difficulties.

Elderly women may experience increased isolation especially when their children adopt the values and lifestyles of host country, leaving older parents feeling disconnected.

Now at last Govt. Initiation leverage legislation mandated to offer monthly income support, targeted shelter, and universal healthcare to elderly women.

Targeted Old-age Homes:- Under the integrated programmers for senior citizen (IPsRC). The Ministry for social justice and Empowerment provider 100% funding to establish regional senior Citizen's homes. This includes specialized exclusive homes for up to 50 elderly women to protect abandoned or windowed seniors.

Universal Health Coverage : Through the flagship (Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY) extension, all senior citizen aged 70 and above receive Rs 5 Lakh annual free health insurance regardless of their income status. Eligible senior are issued a specialized Ayushman Vaya Vandana Card for cashless medical treatment.

Financial and Pension Benefits: The Indira Gandhi National old age Pension Scheme (IGNOPS) offers direct cash transfer to elderly citizens living below the poverty line with specific relaxation rules often favouring destitute widows.

Subsidies Nutrition: The Antyodaya Anna Yojna managed by the department of food and public distribution provides highly subsidized monthly foodgrains (rice and wheat) to vulnerable households, explicitly prioritizing those headed by senior citizen or widows with no societal support.

National elder line: The government maintains a centralized, toll-free National helpline (14567) that provides rapid response counseling, rescue operations for abandoned senior women.

Mobile Medicare Units: Prominent Organizations like help age India run heavily utilized Mobile healthcare units that visit rural areas they distribute free monthly medicines, perform vision restoration cataract surgeries, specially to marginalized elderly women.

Old age is stated to be the most difficult part of one's life in this stage, it is important for an individual to remain happy, satisfied and peaceful (Finlay and Finn 2020) with the sincere efforts from Govt and NGOs the last phase of the elder one he strengthen.

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