



# PSYCHOSOCIAL PROBLEMS OF THE ELDERLY

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## Abstract:

Life is a long journey and ageing is the final part of the journey . It is a natural phenomenon passing through the long – drawn cycle of growth and decay . So, it is an inevitable phase in the life of every person . In earlier time elderly persons were given special respect and high position in society because of their experience and wisdom . But such values of life have been totally changed with the advancement of civilization . Old values have gone and new ideas have taken their place , changing the face of the society in a radical way.

Keywords : Psychosocial Problems, Elderly

## Psychosocial Problems

With the raising level of life expectancy due to the advancement of scientific and medical method old age has been a matter of rather critical concern in every country . With population ageing , countries face problems of financial insecurity and health issues of the elderly, added this are the psychosocial problems that emanate from loneliness , emptiness , depression and despair of being away from the family . These problems are most significant factors among the elders all over the World.

According to the United Nations , the World population is expected to increase to 9.8 billion by 2050 from the current 733 million . During the same period the proportion of the elderly population is expected to increase from 10.4 percent to 21.7 percent. So the problem is global now. In the last few years the elderly population is branded as non- productive and this causes immense harm because they are thought to be burden on the country's economy and affecting adversely . It is indeed a matter of concern because we should convince ourselves that they are also an important part of the society.

With old age come many psychosocial problems in human life . The chief problems may be analyzed to show how the problems affect the life of the elderly . Financial insecurity due to the decrease in income is a serious problem and added medical bills makes matter worse in old age . Many elderly persons are dependent on family members for their daily living and with inadequate monetary support , they are considered burden by the family and the society . Deteriorating health and medical problems are also common factors in old age , physical strength and ability also declines with advancing age. Malnutrition and poverty are a very usual thing in elderly phase of life. Apart from physical problem the elderly suffer from various psychological and emotional problems like a feeling of loneliness , felling of depression and deep despair. Physical abuse , property abuse , neglect financial exploitation , emotional or psychological abuse , health care abuse are various ways by which many older persons suffer at the hands of the family. During the last phase of their life, the

elderly people are subjected to different types of family apathy. The family members consider them a burden and the elderly also receive ill-treatment from other members including daughters – in-law. According to the Help Age India 28% receive ill-treatment from daughters-in-law and 42% from their sons. This is a very common phenomenon of the elderly lives. Lack of physical strength and social isolation makes them victims of such things. And the problem is present in all sections of the society and in both rural and urban areas. Adjustment problem is usually confronted in old age in various ways due to the change in physical, psychological and social World. This is the post-retirement age, the income is reduced and the family head turns into a dependent person, and the financial support from the family is woefully inadequate. Their children begin their new lives and get separated from their parents because most of them are employed in places far away from home. This brings isolation to the elderly persons.

One of the most important factors of psychosocial problems is the physical well being, because majority of the elderly are affected with some kind of diseases or health problems. This produces a sense of hopelessness, despair, anxiety and fear. Problem in health and physical changes affect their confidence and sometimes bring about emotional breakdown. According to the Help Age India 54% of the elderly suffering from two or more non-communicable diseases. It is revealed that the inadequate health service is a big challenge for the elderly in our country. So, it is very important issue is a proper medical system for the survival and physical well-being of the elderly. In this respect they must be treated with special care and attention through social security.

The thought of approaching death is a serious concern for many elderly people with physical and mental decline come the thought of death it gets on their thoughts and spoils mental peace. Serious illness and impending death are constant topics of worry among the elderly population.

It is today accepted that old age is a part of life and it should be accepted and lived as it should be. If this can be managed, old age would become a much better phase of life of depression, bitterness and isolation.

Ageing is a natural process which is bound to come in almost every human life. This is also accepted that old age will bring with it the problems, physical and mental, to them. But, if they accept reality their life can be a little more enjoyable.

### **Suggestions:**

#### **1)Introducing specialized medical care service**

Because of ageing old persons are more likely to fall ill and this calls for emergency treatment. But an inadequate health care system poses a serious challenges to the elderly. Therefore, they need the specialized treatment in their last phase of life. The most worrisome factor for the ageing population is the lack of a proper government policy for the elderly. This is one area where the government must take some specific steps to put in place a medical support system for the elderly specially poor elderly. (swasthyasathipolicy, Pradhanmantreeswasturakashajonan) health care service for the elderly.

#### **2)In the form of service providers**

To enable the illiterate and ignorant elderly to avail of the government welfare schemes government agencies should launch awareness programmes. Mass media should be publicizing the programmes focusing on the need for implementing the official welfare policies. Most of the elderly do not know about the 2007 parent maintenance act. Through the awareness programmes they can be made aware of such legal aids. This will help in devising appropriate policies and programmes and extending legal assistance to the elderly.

#### **3)Introducing counseling facilities :**

The weak and the dependent elderly in particular badly need physical , mental and emotional care and support . Consequently , they suffer from a sense of loneliness and depression . Hence , to address such mental health issues, in this regard they need a kind of family environment in the institutional set up or non institutional set up. In this respect the family , NGOs and the general public should act in close co-ordination to apply the healing touch to the psychological and mental hapless of the elderly. Family played the key role as a primary caregivers in this respect.

#### 4) Introducing geriatric facilities for the elderly

Every government hospital should have a geriatric ward and a minimum of 15-20 beds should be arranged for the elderly particularly for the poorer ones (suffering from financial crisis).

In the sunset of their life , the elderly badly need love , affection , understanding , attention and delicate care. Such an approach could help better the lot of the elderly who deserve a fair deal.

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