



ABUSE AND NEGLECT OF ELDERLY IN THE FAMILIES OF KERALA AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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Introduction

- Longevity is a most challenging, positive, and demographic phenomena of this era
- More than at any other time in history, the world's population is living longer
- By 2050 there will be 64 countries where older people constitute more than 30% of the total population
- Shift from three-generation societies to four-generation societies.
- India has the largest aged population in the world currently. In 2012 there were 97 million older people in India and by 2026, the elderly population will cross 173 million



AGEING IN KERALA

- In Kerala, a person at birth is expected to live for 74 years
- While in other states like Bihar, Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, the expectancy is in the range of 58-61 years.
- People above 60 constitute 13 per cent of the state's population of 3.34 crore compared to the national figure of 8.2 per cent
- In 2026 it is expected to be 18.3% and by 2050 it would be **35.46** per cent of Kerala's total population.



The ageing scenario in Kerala

- **3.49** per cent would be in the age group 60-69 years;
- **22.24** per cent in the age group 70-79 years;
- **9.73** per cent in the age group of 80 years and above.
- The number of old age homes increased from 150 in 2000 to 400 in 2012



ELDER ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- Intentional actions that cause harm or create a serious risk of harm (whether or not harm is intended)
- to a vulnerable elder by a caregiver or other person
- who stands in a trust relationship to the elder
- includes failure by a caregiver to satisfy the elder's basic needs or to protect the elder from harm



Indian scenario

- still a higher proportion of elderly are living with their families
- The generation gap is widening due to fast changing lifestyle, globalization, migration of young and influence of diverse ideologies.
- One in three elderly in India is facing abuse and a majority of them is residing with their families.
- Elderlies knew about social protection mechanisms but didn't use them for lack of faith in the system's ability to solve their problems.



ELDER NEGLECT IN TRIVANDRUM, KERALA

- Trivandrum the state capital has been selected for the present study due to its unique position among the districts of Kerala in demographic as well as social characteristics.
- Densest district in Kerala with 1,509 people per square km
- As the elder population increases, so does elder mistreatment - abuse and neglect
- 300 elderly were interviewed from the sample households (184 women and 116 men).
- Discusses occurrences of different types of abuse, including physical, sexual, emotional and financial, as well as neglect and abandonment.



Gender and Type of Abuse Experienced

- Among females - 65.9 experienced physical ,61% emotional and 33.7 financial abuse
- 47.4% of males experienced financial abuse and 45.7% are abandoned.
- Among Total respondents:-
 - 69 percent financially,51.3 emotionally ,45% Physically abused
 - 21 percent are abandoned and 35 percent are neglected.
- It can be inferred that financial , emotional and physical abuse are dominating in the study area.

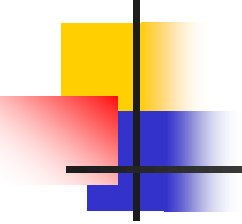
Type of Abuse and Relationship with the Abuser

- Sons as abusers mostly inflicted financial, followed by abandonment, emotional and physical abuse.
- 42 percent of sons are in 30-39 years, 28 percent of son abusers are below thirty years of age category.
- Both daughters and daughter in laws equally abuse their parents/in laws financially.
- Daughters aged below 30 years committed financial abuse daughter in laws aged above 30 years commit financial abuse.
- son in laws abandon their parents in laws and majority of them are aged above 40 years
- Elderly spouses have been financially abused by forcibly taking away the jewels and household items.
- Daughter in laws –threaten and refuse to give their belongings.



Nature of Physical ,Emotional ,Financial Abuses experienced by the elderly

- Physical -hair pulling -11.7%,kicked 13%, slapped 9%, restraining in one place- 70%, improper medication- 76.3%, chaining-4% (one person may be experiencing more than one type of abuse)
- Emotional- degrading by using filthy verbal language 73.3%, shouting 90% and showed their vengeance 33.7%, isolating from social gatherings- 81.6%

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- Financial- money withdrawn without explanation- 62% ,stealing of valuable things 14%, Not allowed to purchase the necessary things 46% and changed the Will 8%
 - Other forms of abuses: Refusal or failure to provide himself/herself with adequate food, fluids, clothing, shelter, personal hygiene, medication, or safety precautions.



Sexual, Neglect, Abandonment

- Sexual-Though a few reported on sexual abuse they failed to share the nature of abuse they faced.
- Neglect- not permitted to use toilets and bathrooms (12%)/ not able to use toilets and bathrooms on time (32.6%) improper food served (46.7%)
- Abandonment-not permitted and taken to functions of their relatives (30%)and they are abandoned in the road when they are taken out for shopping or to hospital (13.3%)



Frequency of Abuse

- Sometimes
 - Female- 69%; Male 72%
- . Everyday
 - Female- 15%; Male 24%
- During celebrations at home /within the family
 - Female- 8%; Male 4%



Reasons on which they Feel abused

- Family members busy with their own lives /work and consequent lack of attention.
 - Female **70%** Male **58%**
- Family members don't interact with them
 - Female **53%** Male **73%**
- Family members don't spend time with them even when not busy with work
 - Female **46%** Male **23%**
- Needs are met with indifference
 - Female **39 %** Male **47%**



Persons approached for when abused

- No action taken:- Female **22%** Male **46%**
- Discussed with others in the family, Neighborhood/Community:- Female **50%** Male **36%**
- Approached Social worker:- Female **28%** Male **64%**
- Approached SCA -Female 17% Male 2%
- Approached Police - Female 6% Male 8%
- No response - Female 11% Male 4%



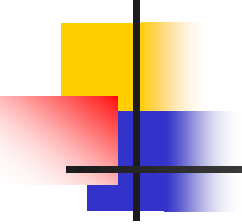
Socio-psychological problems faced

- Most severe problems faced by the elderly happens to be- *lack of emotional support* ,Family members busy with their own lives and subsequent lack of care and attention.
- Quarrel over property strains warm relationship with children.
- The least severe problems happens to be- Over the issue of raising grand children and Lack of physical space within the house.



SUGGESTIONS TO OVERCOME THE PROBLEM OF ELDER ABUSE

- Urgent measures to check physical abuse :- This could be achieved through
 - state initiatives like community policing
 - Provide opportunities for safe and open talk to someone about the abuse (such as doctor, a trusted friend, or a member of the club)
- Pension schemes, avenues for utilising the skills of elderly are essential in ensuring financial security for elderly
- Measures to check snatching of properties from elderly should be ensured

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- Media coverage about elder abuse in different avenues.
 - Generate awareness amongst public for needs of the elderly
 - Sensitize the youth about geriatric care and wellbeing



Conclusion

- Visibility of Elderly mistreatment is yet to be achieved. Suppression of such problems are wide.
- Given that population ageing and elder mistreatment are emerging issues globally, different agencies like Senior Citizens' Organizations, NGOs, Government Departments, members of National and State Human Rights Commissions, academicians in the field of social science, health, demography and other experts associated with ageing issues need to work together.



Conclusion

- Only a holistic approach to this grave problem could make some changes in the current situation.
- A bridge between the major stakeholders is necessary for synergy between the efforts of various actors and promoting effective partnerships in population ageing and for working together towards common targets and goals.

THANK YOU



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