

ELDERLY WOMEN: PROBLEMS IN SOCIAL ADJUSTMENTS

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ABSTRACT

In industrialized countries, women have proven their worth by standing alongside men and working jobs, earning money, helping to feed their children, and even making important scientific and mathematical discoveries. A common Indian proverb state, "Raising girls is like watering someone else's lawn. This proverb says what India's attitude towards women is, and it is not positive. Women in India are seen as a burden to society, not an asset. In India, though, this rarely happens, if at all, outside urban area. Women in rural India are seen as property. When a girl marries into a family, she works for her husband's family's welfare, not her parent's welfare.

Keywords: *Elderly, Social Adjustment, Family, Society, Mathematical Discoveries.*

Introduction

"You can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of its women".

– Jawahar Lal Nehru

It is absolutely true that the worth of a civilization can be judged by the place given to women in the society. One of several factors that substantiate the greatness of India's ancient culture is the respectable place granted to women. The Muslim influence on India caused significant decline in the status of women. They were deprived of their rights of equality and subjugation. The contact of Indian culture with that of the British also brought progress in the status of women. The third factor in the renewal of women's position was the influence of Mahatma Gandhi who induced women to contribute in the Freedom Movement. As a result of this recovery of freedom, women in India have identified themselves as teachers, nurses, air-hostesses, booking clerks, receptionists, and doctors. They are also participating in politics and administration. But in spite of this amelioration in the status of women, the evils of illiteracy, dowry, ignorance, and economic slavery would have to be fully removed in order to give them their rightful place in Indian society.

Concept of Elderly Women

The aged population in India is currently the second largest in the world. In modern times, for all practical purposes the individuals who are above sixty years of old are considered to be aged or 'senior citizens' of the status. Chronological age of sixty is considered the beginning of old age. The age at which a male or female is considered old varies from society to society. Female are considered aged much early compared to the males of the same age cohort. Menopause is one of the landmarks in the aging process of women. Some societies demarcate the young from the aged based on productivity. This is more common in pre-industrial societies. "In Japan aged are defined as all those who are 60 years of age and above. In Japan the aged men are referred to as "wet leaves". The Chinese culture appears to have influenced this demarcation.

The Concept of Social Adjustment

The old people have to adjust not only to loss of occupation and income and bad health, they have to adjust also to psycho-social problem. Adjustment may create difficulties as it has to conform to basic needs, personality, attitude, social relations, cultural & spiritual aspirations.

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Problem of adjustment are associated with both contemporaneous factors & antecedent life conditions such as retirement, possible reduction in income, loss of spouse and deteriorating health. According to them past studies indicate that well adjusted subjects on the whole enjoy good physical health, had a positive self concept, had more friends, participated in more leisure & recreational activities and complaint less of being lonely.

Elderly Women & Social Adjustment

Women in India are treated like 'Holy Cows', worshiped and whipped at the same time! All the talk about importance of women is more Brahmanic text used for chit-chat. Yes, women are a lot more empowered today. But who are they? And what does being empowered mean?

Hindu widows, the poorest, are abandoned from society after their husband's death, not for religious reasons, but because of tradition and because they are seen as a financial consume on their families. Usually, their sons and daughters get rid of them. We Indian's wag our tongues about how people in the west leave their parents at old-age homes. Even within well-to-do middle class families. Elderly are pushed to a corner in the house and treated bad. Siblings actually fight with each other about who is to take care of their parents.

The old people have to adjust not only to loss of occupation and income and bad health, they have to adjust also to psycho-social problem. Comforts and luxuries may be of no use if emotional needs of the elderly are not met. The poor may be living a happy life if they are well-adjusted and have no complaints to make either against the members of the family or the society in general. If the aged are exploited or abused they cannot be treated as adjusted.

Human personalities are complex and no single definition covering all aspects of ageing may be possible. Under these circumstances it is better to say simple that adjustment means peaceful and meaningful existence which satisfies physical, social and spiritual needs of the individual and simultaneously satisfies the values and culture of the society.

Five Major Problems Related with Elderly Women

- Psychological problem
- Physical problem
- Social problem
- Emotional problem
- Financial problem

Some Major Challenges Faced by Elderly Women

- The problem and the issue of its grey population have not been given serious consideration.
- It is a very unfortunate situation that children & youth are the centre of every society.
- The elderly woman faces emotional, physical and financial insecurity.
- Rapid changes in social scenario are also a great challenge for elderly women.
- The female elderly are mostly widow so that women depends more on others.
- Elderly women face greater alienation and isolation situations in society.
- Ageing women face more loss of status and decision making power.
- Mostly the elderly woman faces the problem of less nutrition and Poor health problems due to childbearing.
- As the woman grow older, after the death of their husband, they become more dependent.
- Their relation with her children decides their fate in old age.

Some Suggestions for Better Adjustments

- Be active. Don't let yourself be pushed back because you're older.
- In family gathering don't sit on the sidelines, rather participate with all age groups.
- Try to engage more in the world mentally and physically, it helps to overcome ageism easily.
- Live in the present, and look at the future.
- Always help your children and grandchildren and show that you're aware of what's going on around you.
- Try to use email and social media if you feel comfortable it can show your grandchildren you can communicate like they do.
- Be positive. Attitude has a lot to do with how people can overcome ageism.

- Zest the experience and wisdom that come with age and put them to good use.
- Be as independent as you can. If you assume that because you're a certain age, you're unable to do certain things, you won't be able to do them. You won't lose those abilities if you continue to do for yourself.
- You should enjoy doing your work as before. Go shopping. Do your own banking. Eat out in restaurants.

Conclusion

In the traditional Indian society the elderly were holding positions of supremacy in the family and society endowed with special privilege. It is conventionally believed that wisdom will blossom with advancing age and hence, the elderly with diversified rich life experience would be in a better position to guide the younger generation in multifarious matter. A part from this, in India aged people play the most significant part in the socialization of children by transmitting their knowledge to the young. The Varna-Ashrama-Dharma sutra of life also bestowed honors and respect on the old persons. Such a system has provided economic, social and emotional security to the aged. This rosy picture, however, is undergoing change on account of ever increasing pressure of population on limited resources besides other factor resulting in increasing neglect of elderly.

The structural changes taking place in Indian society concomitant on industrialization, urbanization and modernization are also detrimental to the welfare of the elderly in India. The real problems of the aged have begun with shift in family structure from extended and joint families to nuclear families. The increasing tendency for the family to break up into smaller units even when the parents are alive has increased the vulnerability of the aged.

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