OLD AGE HOME AND ITS IMPACT ON SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT

With the advent of industrialization there has been a significant change in the family system. Joint families disintegrated and small nuclear families emerged where the young couple find no time to look after their old parents. In such families the position of the old has become a crucial factor. In such families the position of the old has become a crucial factor. The senior citizen themselves find it difficult to adjust with the modern ways of living of their young children. In such a situation how the senior citizen in the urban set up are being looked after by the family is worth enquiring. In the desire to be self-relevant. The clashes between generations, distress the old in the cities. Hence, many of the problems facing the urban elderly do not exist in the villages. In the contrast to the rural population the city elderly population is quite different. Many from this group have taken recourse to old Age Homes. Along with the lonely, the helplessness they have differences with their kith and kin perhaps the next generation, which force them to leave their own home and enter the premises of Old Age Homes

KEYWORDS: Old Age Home, Social Impact, Generation Gap and Social Implication

INTRODUCTION

Old age is part of our life cycle. Senior citizens have always been an integral and important part of the family in Indian Society. In the earlier society, the role and the authority of the elders was both supportive and upheld. All ancient and scared literatures including the Vedas and the Epics portray parents almost as God. As a consequence, young people would be always respectful towards the elderly. They would abide by the wishes and authority of older persons. According to Vedas human life is devided into four ashramas or stages: Brahmacharya (student life) , Grihastha (married life), Vanaprastha(life of retirement) and Sanyasa (Life of renunciation). The movement from one stage to another was gradual with prescribed specific duties and observances associated with each stage. This minimized inter-stage clash and conflict. When a son would

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enter into Grihastha ashram, father would usually proceed to Vanaprasatha, passing on the responsibilities to the son.

In most traditional societies the process of the life cycle presented relatively for in these societies roles and statuses were prescribed by the age and gender in a fairly rigid pattern there were few significant option open to the individual as he or she proceeded through the life cycle and the comparatively static nature of the culture provided stability in the roles and mutual interactions of the generations .these traditional societies usually accorded a respectable and an honoured place to the old who, because of their years of experience, were regarded the repository of the knowledge and wisdom of the community . Simmons (1945)[2] in a study of traditional societies found that these communities offered such a satisfactory role to the senior citizen that many people looked forward to old age rather than fearing it. The senior citizen were often the dominant member of the family, wielded considerable political power in the community and were expected to remain active in the community and to perform some forms of light labour. However, these traditional societies are now undergoing rapid changes because of modernization, industrialization and urbanization and are adopting the western culture and philosophy, particularly that of the Foreign culture[3]. On the other hand the western society is oriented towards youth, mobility and activity and the senior citizen have no honourable or useful place in society. The knowledge of aging and the aged, in this society, was dominated by myths, prejudices, and ignorance as a band about personal fears of growing old. Such myths and stereotypes could be dangerous and damaging to both the aging and the status of senior citizen during their life course.

Creandell(1980)[4] to emphasise this point has, given an illustration "if someone believes that 'senility' is an inevitable consequence of aging (it is not) then a relative who is old may be treated as though he or she were, in fact, senile. For example, if grandfather cannot remember something that took place sixty years ago and his relatives believe that senility and aging are synonymous, then grandfather's forgetfulness may be interpreted as senility. If this happens, the concept of senility may be forced on him. His questions will be ignored since they will be seen as babbling. When he does not respond to questions or commands, it will reinforce the fact that he is senile and not simply hard of hearing. When he has trouble in buttoning his shirt, it will be because his mind is 'gone' and not because he has arthritis. In time all of his behavior will be defined as that of a senile ols man. In an atmosphere in which individuals tell him he is senile ('let me do it for you') and act towards him as though he were senile, he may eventually begin to play the role expected of him or be severely chastised or worse drugged and put in an institution."

TRADITIONAL AND MODERN ASPECT OF OLD AGE HOMES

In modern societies ,in contrast to the traditional societies, the aged are deprived of defined roles and statuses and are poorly integrated into the social structure .They can no longer take it for granted to lay claim on their children or kin for support and social participation , and any advice given is likely to go unheeded for it would be considered irrelevant. There is a stigma associated with old age for the modren society has created a way of life that emphasizes youth, beauty knowledge and intelligence are often associated with youth and even the accepted values of society are those of the young. In old age physical and biological changes take place like hardening of the arteries and changes in the bone structure which lead to same medical problems in thinking, Strokes, as lack of mobility, prostate and heart problems ,bone fractures , eye diseases, arthritis and many more .these in turn effect the individual psychologically and result in change in life style , emotional problems and poor health. In all the countries the senior citizens have to face these problems by themselves with little help from children and relatives.

The impact of retirement is tremendous as it results in loss of role, status, power, opportunities for interaction and as Miller (1965) [5]states "loss of an occupational identity" with the result the individual withdraws from society and the little social interaction. Therefore retirement the point demarcating middle age from old age can lead to low self-esteem, decreased levels of satisfaction , feeling of loneliness and hopelessness.

There are three needs of the senior citizen, viz. health needs, economic needs and socio-psychological needs. As for health needs the government alone cannot meet the needs although we have one of the best laid out medical system in the world. For an senior citizen belonging to lower strata of society who lives far away from the hospital, an illness be a major calamity. If he falls ill, he cannot go to the hospital alone; he has to be accompanied by a family member who expresses his inability being a daily wage earner. Usually the family members do not care for the treatment of the senior citizens. The main problem, is lack of resources, infrastructure, will and a sound health delivery mechanism. It can be argued that if we can have pediatrics for treatment of children, why not have Geriatrics for treatment of the elderly? Unfortunately there is not a single Medical School in this country where Geriatrics is taught at the under-graduate or the post-graduate level. There is no institution in Chennai where they have recently started a course on 'Geriatrics'. There are only two doctors doing this course per year. If we want to have a Geriatric hospital in every district, just imagine how many decades it will take to achieve this objective.

Out of these 70 million of the senior citizen population, half of them are senior citizen women. Nearly 55 per cent of the elderly women's are receivers rather than givers. It is a pathetic situation that elderly people who have given their best or an overwhelming majority of India's population living in rural areas especially the elderly, the situation is very bad.

The third aspect to consider is the socio-psycho and emotional needs of the aged, following liberalization, urbanization etc. the joint family system has been broken up. There has been a significant change since independence, but the change has been particularly rapid in the three decades or so. Unfortunately, the change has been for the worse. Fifty years ago, the elderly person in Indian family unit was the Head of the family, but now the elderly have lost that privileged position. Today, in most households, the elderly person is only an appendage just another person existing. With the advent of industrialization there has been a significant change in the family system. Joint families have been disintegrated and small nuclear families have emerged where the young couple find no time to look after their old parents. Today's society is more materialistic. The senior citizen in such a situation has become burden on their family members and is treated as such. We bear all the time of how elderly people even in affluent families feel rejected and ignored by their family members. This was not so earlier. The United Nations has declared 1999 as the 'International Year for older persons'. Hence let us resolve that each one of us shall look after an elderly person. If you not have an elderly person in your family adopt one in the neighbor. We should remember always that all of us will grow old one fine day.

OLD AGE HOME SYSTEM

old age homes is necessary younger generation do not have time to meet their needs like medical expenses, special food etc., and old age home betterment of senior citizen by providing physical and mental status, greater possibility for social bounding. Elderlies suffer from many problems like health, economic, social and emotional. But now a day's young generation not performing their duties and ignored. The old age people are burden of family, as the result of all this they live depressed life. That reason now a day established of various old age homes has helped these senior citizens to lead a healthy and secured life. In the old age home they are well treated and they get the good opportunity to enjoy their life to fullest. Further author discussed, what are health problems in old age home residing inmates, in modern day why need old age homes, status of old age in India their role and what are the necessity facility, some recreation activities providing to elder people in old age homes also covered.

Old age homes are residents with nursing and assisted living facilities for accommodating the elderly. Here the elderly are given continuing care and attention based on their needs and concerns. As far as our country is concerned, old age homes are still a very nascent concept. India has always taken pride in its tradition of a reciprocal familial commitment system for ages. The joint family system is one significant aspect of the Indian family.

Elders have always been seen as equivalents of gods and the culture of filial piety is one that has been deeply embedded in our culture. Traditionally, aging parents lived with their adult children.

But old-age homes are gaining more and more prominence in this fast-changing world. There has been a paradigm shift as a result of modernization, urbanization, an increase in life expectancy due to advances made in medical science, increased literacy rate and migration of younger generations. As people are more exposed to the diverse cultures in the world, there is a tendency for most to long for privacy and independence.

Due to rapid growth of population today the senior citizens find difficult to adjust with their own children because of generation gap and their varying perceptions. The outcome is the seniors have to yield to the wishes of the juniors in the interest of peace in the family. If it does not come about, the lives of the seniors become torturous and they develop feeling that they are unwanted. The contemporary scenario in India does not provide for good community care for the elderly. Thus aged suffers from numerous familial, social, economic, psychological and emotional problems

NEED OF OLD AGE CARE

Many are tilting towards a nuclear family concept and are eventually exploring the possibilities of escaping the responsibility of having to deal with their parents hands-on. While this is not the case everywhere, there are more grueling facts about children abandoning their elders for selfish reasons. The increasing cases of chronic diseases among the elderly are also expected to augment the growth of old age homes. As the elders are incapable of contributing to household work or monetarily, they are often considered as a liability. As a result, they are subject to abuse and neglect and eventually in some worse case scenarios abandoned without a penny to their name. This is more prevalent amongst the underprivileged communities as money becomes a major factor. They are unable to provide for their medical care and expenses relating to the well-being of the elderly population. The abuse can be classified as physical, sexual, psychological or financial. According to the Report of the Technical Group on Population Projections for India and States 2011-2036, there are nearly 138 million elderly persons in India in 2021 and it is further expected to increase by around 56 million elderly persons in 2031. There are 18 million homeless elderly persons in India based on the Longitudinal Ageing Survey of India 2020.

Currently, there are 728 old age homes in India. Old Age Homes in India may be both public and private homes. They provide different geriatric services in India including in-home care, hourly adult care, hospice care, palliative care, assisted living and nursing homes. These services are also based on the respective disease indications. Old Age Homes in India is still viewed with serious misgivings. However, due to the nation's rapidly ageing elderly population and its subsequent increase in demand for long term care through Old Age Homes in India, the government has formulated various policies and schemes. Alongside the government, there are numerous goodwill organisations working towards helping the elderly population in need. One such organisation is the Wishes and Blessings NGO, based in New Delhi. Under its Umbrella project, Care for the Elderly, the NGO has set up a series of Old Age Homes in India specifically based in Delhi. Mann Ka Tilak is the first charitable old age home set up on 25th April 2018.

CONCLUSION

In the old age homes he elders are given uncompromised attention and service where facilities including housing, boarding, food, entertainment, recreation and medical facilities are provided free of cost. They are given a new lease on life and are given the dignity and respect that everyone is entitled to. There is a serious need for deliberation and propaganda to cater for the alarming problems the senior citizens are facing. Supporting corporate and social work organizations and sensitizing the younger generation to be more mindful and responsible towards the elderly is imperative. The elderly need to be made aware of their existing rights. There is an important need for them to be empowered and their contribution needs to be endorsed at all levels be it the family, society, and the nation at large.

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