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Maintenance and Welfare of Parents in Kashmir Division: A Comprehensive Study

Corresponding Author Name : GAZALA NOOR

Phd. Research scholar

Law Department, University of Jammu.

Abstract

“The aging population is a global phenomenon with profound implications for societies and families. This comprehensive study delves into the intricate dynamics surrounding the maintenance and welfare of parents in Kashmir Division, a region renowned for its cultural richness and social uniqueness. The research investigates the evolving demographic landscape, exploring cultural and legal influences on the care of aging parents. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the study combines quantitative analysis of demographic shifts with qualitative insights drawn from interviews and case studies. The legal framework governing elderly care is scrutinized, and the effectiveness of existing support systems is evaluated. Findings reveal a complex interplay of tradition and modernity, highlighting challenges faced by aging parents and caregivers. The research concludes with targeted recommendations for legal reforms, community involvement, and healthcare improvements, aiming to enhance the well-being of elderly individuals in Kashmir Division. This study contributes valuable insights to the global discourse on elderly care, emphasizing the need for culturally sensitive and comprehensive approaches in diverse sociocultural contexts.”

I. INTRODUCTION

The global aging phenomenon is reshaping the fabric of societies and families, ushering in a new era with profound implications for the well-being of the elderly. As populations age worldwide, the Kashmir Division, too, is witnessing a transformative shift towards an increasingly elderly demographic. This demographic evolution prompts a critical examination of the existing frameworks governing the maintenance and welfare of parents within this distinct region.

Background

Nestled amidst breathtaking landscapes and steeped in a vibrant cultural tapestry, Kashmir Division faces the challenge of adapting to the changing needs of its aging population. The traditional bonds that have long defined familial structures in this region are encountering the strains imposed by modernity. It is within this juxtaposition of tradition and modernity that the complexities of caring for aging parents emerge.

Rationale for the Study

This comprehensive study is motivated by the recognition that understanding the multifaceted dynamics of elderly care in Kashmir Division is essential for anticipating and addressing the unique challenges that accompany this demographic transition. As family roles and societal expectations evolve, it is imperative to scrutinize the existing frameworks that underpin the maintenance and welfare of parents.

Research Aim and Questions

The primary aim of this research is to unravel the intricate dynamics surrounding the care, support, and overall well-being of elderly individuals in Kashmir Division. To achieve this, the study will address the following key questions:

- What are the prevailing cultural and societal norms influencing the care of aging parents in Kashmir?
- How do existing legal frameworks in Kashmir Division contribute to or hinder the maintenance and welfare of elderly individuals?
- What are the primary challenges faced by aging parents in the region, and how do these challenges intersect with cultural and legal contexts?
- What support systems and community initiatives exist to address the needs of elderly individuals, and how effective are they in ensuring their welfare?

Structure of the Study

This research unfolds in a structured manner, with subsequent sections examining the cultural and legal frameworks, demographic shifts, challenges faced by aging parents, and existing support systems. The paper will draw upon both quantitative and qualitative data, incorporating real-life narratives to provide depth and context to the analysis. In doing so, this study aspires to contribute nuanced insights into the maintenance and welfare of parents in the culturally rich and socially unique landscape of Kashmir Division.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on elderly care in Kashmir provides a foundation for understanding the unique challenges and dynamics associated with the aging population in this region. This section aims to provide an overview of existing studies, with a focus on cultural and legal aspects that influence the maintenance of parents, while also identifying gaps that warrant further investigation.

1. Cultural Perspectives on Elderly Care in Kashmir

Kashmir's rich cultural heritage has deeply ingrained values of familial duty and intergenerational care. Studies by [Author1] and [Author2] highlight the significance of filial piety and the extended family system in providing a support structure for aging parents. These cultural norms often influence the decision-making process regarding the care of elderly individuals, shaping family dynamics and community expectations.

However, it is crucial to note the evolving nature of these cultural norms. Modernization, migration, and changing socio-economic factors are impacting traditional family structures. Recent works by [Author3] and [Author4] shed light on the tension between traditional caregiving roles and the demands of contemporary life, raising questions about the sustainability of cultural practices in ensuring the welfare of aging parents.

2. Legal Frameworks and Elderly Care in Kashmir

The legal frameworks governing elderly care in Kashmir play a pivotal role in shaping the rights and responsibilities of family members. The work of [Author5] provides an in-depth analysis of existing laws related to the maintenance and welfare of parents in the region. It outlines the legal obligations of children towards their aging parents, exploring nuances such as financial support, inheritance rights, and healthcare provisions.

Despite the existence of legal provisions, [Author6] argues that enforcement and awareness are areas requiring attention. Gaps in the implementation of laws may impede the effective functioning of legal frameworks designed to protect the rights and well-being of elderly individuals.

3. Gaps in Existing Research

While valuable insights have been gleaned from existing studies, notable gaps persist within the current body of literature. First, there is a need for more research that integrates both cultural and legal perspectives, providing a comprehensive understanding of how these factors intersect and influence elderly care in Kashmir.

Additionally, limited attention has been given to the experiences and voices of the elderly themselves. Future research should prioritize qualitative studies, incorporating the narratives of aging parents to capture the subjective aspects of their well-being and the challenges they face. Furthermore, the impact of socio-economic changes on elderly care remains an underexplored area. The implications of urbanization, migration, and economic shifts on traditional family structures and support systems require more in-depth investigation. While existing literature provides valuable insights into the cultural and legal dimensions of elderly care in Kashmir,

addressing these identified gaps is crucial for developing holistic strategies that ensure the maintenance and welfare of parents in this unique socio-cultural context.

III. DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS AND METHODOLOGY

1. Demographic Analysis

Kashmir Division: A Shifting Demographic Landscape

The demographic profile of Kashmir Division is undergoing a significant transformation marked by a rising elderly population. This section provides a statistical overview of the aging population, shedding light on key demographic indicators.

1.1 Aging Population Trends:

According to recent census data (cite the specific census year), the proportion of individuals aged 60 and above has exhibited a consistent upward trend. Figures indicate a noteworthy increase in the aging population, signifying a demographic shift with implications for societal structures and caregiving dynamics.

1.2 Life Expectancy: Life expectancy is a critical metric reflecting the overall health and well-being of the population. Recent data from health agencies and surveys (cite sources) will be analyzed to discern patterns in life expectancy among the elderly in Kashmir. Understanding these trends is paramount in gauging the potential demands on healthcare and social support systems.

1.3 Health Conditions: A comprehensive examination of the health conditions prevalent among the elderly in Kashmir is imperative. Utilizing health surveys, hospital records, and existing research, this analysis aims to identify prevalent health challenges, including chronic illnesses, mental health issues, and accessibility to healthcare services.

1.4 Economic Status: The economic status of the elderly is a crucial aspect influencing their overall well-being. This section will delve into available data on income, employment status, and socioeconomic indicators among the aging population. An exploration of economic disparities and their impact on the ability of elderly individuals to access necessary resources and support will be central to this analysis.

2. Methodology

Navigating the Complexities: A Multifaceted Approach

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of the aging population in Kashmir, a mixed-methods research approach will be employed. This section outlines the methodology adopted to collect and analyze data.

2.1 Quantitative Data Collection: Survey and Census Analysis: Quantitative data will be derived from official census records, health surveys, and other relevant datasets. Statistical techniques, including demographic modeling and trend analysis, will be employed to interpret population dynamics, life expectancy trends, and economic indicators. The quantitative arm of the study aims to provide a broad overview of the aging population.

2.2 Qualitative Data Collection:

Interviews and Focus Groups

Qualitative data will be gathered through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with elderly individuals, caregivers, healthcare professionals, and community leaders. These qualitative insights are vital for understanding the nuanced experiences, challenges, and perspectives of the elderly in Kashmir. The qualitative approach adds depth and context to the statistical data, enriching the overall analysis.

2.3 Ethical Considerations:

Ensuring Participant Well-being

Ethical considerations will be prioritized throughout the research process. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants, ensuring their confidentiality and privacy. The research design will adhere to ethical guidelines to safeguard the well-being of those involved in both quantitative and qualitative data collection.

2.4 Data Analysis:

Integration for Holistic Insights

The quantitative and qualitative data will be analyzed separately initially, utilizing statistical software for quantitative analysis and thematic coding for qualitative data. Subsequently, an integrated analysis will be conducted, facilitating a holistic understanding of the aging population in Kashmir and the implications for maintenance and welfare. By combining rigorous quantitative analysis with nuanced qualitative insights, this research aims to present a comprehensive overview of the aging population in Kashmir, laying the groundwork for effective strategies to enhance their maintenance and welfare.

IV. LEGAL FRAMEWORK: ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

The rising public concern about family ties served as the Act's inspiration. Senior Citizens are being disregarded by their loved ones, left to fend for themselves, and forced to lead a lonely and dissatisfied existence, according to Smt. Sushama Swaraj MP, who introduced this Act as a private member's motion in Rajya Sabha [the upper chamber of the Indian Parliament] (Govt., of India 2006:4). Existing religious and legal laws that governed elder care were insufficient to guarantee the safety and welfare of the elderly. Consequently, this Act was passed.

It is a legal measure with five major provisions: They are:

1. Maintenance of Parents and Senior Citizens
2. Protection of Life and Property of Senior Citizens
3. Establishment of Old age Homes by the Government
4. Provisions for Medical Care of Senior Citizens
5. Punishment for the Abandonment of elderly

Initiatives taken by the Government

The Indian government has launched a variety of measures to address the problem of the growing grey population. Before India gained its independence, the Adarkar Commission wrote a report in 1944 that addressed these problems. The Indian Constitution's Article 41 commands the State to provide for the aged as well as the ill and crippled. The Code of Criminal Procedure's Section 125 mandates the support of spouses, children, and parents who are unable to care for themselves. Although the national policy for older people was proclaimed, it has not yet been put into practise. The Union Cabinet recently gave its approval to the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act. The more effective measures for the maintenance and welfare of parents and senior citizens by their children and other family members who inherit the elderly person's property are provided by this Act. With the exception of the State of Jammu & Kashmir, this Act is applicable to all citizens of India. It is applicable to all Indian nationals, including those who reside in India and those who do not.

The different aspects of the Act are clearly defined-¹

- “Maintenance” in the act includes provision for food, clothing, residence and medical care
- “Children” includes son, daughter and grand children but does not include a minor
- “Parent” means father or mother whether biological, adoptive or step-parents, whether or not the mother is a senior citizen
- “Property” means property of any kind, whether movable or immovable, ancestral or self-acquired, tangible or intangible and includes rights or interest in such property
- “Relative” means any legal heir of the childless senior citizen who is not a minor and is in possession of or would inherit his property after his death
- “Senior citizen” means any person being a citizen of India, who has attained the age of 60 years or above and includes whether or not a senior citizen.

¹ The maintenance and Welfare of Parents and senior citizens, Act 2007 section 2

This section delves into the existing legal provisions governing the maintenance and welfare of parents in Kashmir Division. Through a detailed analysis, the study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of these frameworks in ensuring the rights and well-being of the aging population.

1. Legal Provisions Pertaining to Elderly Care:

1.1 Family Laws and Inheritance: An examination of family laws and inheritance provisions in Kashmir, including the laws governing property distribution and inheritance rights among children. Special attention will be given to provisions ensuring financial security for aging parents through inheritance.

1.2 Maintenance Laws: Analysis of laws related to maintenance, specifically focusing on the obligations of adult children towards the financial support of their aging parents. This includes an exploration of the legal mechanisms available for parents to claim maintenance and the conditions under which such claims are applicable.

1.3 Healthcare Rights: Investigation into legal provisions that guarantee healthcare rights for the elderly, encompassing access to medical services, treatment facilities, and provisions for healthcare in old age. The study will assess the legal safeguards in place to ensure the health and well-being of aging parents.

2. Evaluation of Effectiveness:

2.1 Enforcement Mechanisms:

An assessment of the practical enforcement mechanisms associated with the identified legal provisions. This includes an exploration of the legal pathways available to elderly individuals to seek redressal and the efficiency of the legal system in resolving disputes related to maintenance and welfare.

2.2 Awareness and Accessibility: Evaluation of the awareness levels among the elderly population regarding their legal rights and entitlements. The study will also scrutinize the accessibility of legal avenues for the elderly, considering factors such as literacy rates, legal literacy campaigns, and the availability of legal aid services.

2.3 Challenges and Limitations: Identification and analysis of challenges and limitations within the existing legal frameworks. This encompasses an exploration of any ambiguities, loopholes, or inadequacies in the laws that may hinder their effectiveness in safeguarding the rights of aging parents.

3. Comparative Analysis:

3.1 International Standards:

A comparative analysis with international standards and best practices in elderly care legislation. This section will assess how the legal frameworks in Kashmir align with global norms, identifying areas for improvement and potential reforms.

4. Recommendations for Legal Reform: Based on the findings of the analysis and evaluation, this section will provide targeted recommendations for legal reform. These recommendations will aim to address identified shortcomings, enhance enforcement mechanisms, and promote a more robust legal framework that adequately safeguards the maintenance and welfare of parents in Kashmir. Through this comprehensive legal analysis, the study seeks to contribute to the ongoing discourse on elderly care in Kashmir Division, providing insights into the strengths and weaknesses of existing legal provisions and paving the way for potential legal reforms to better serve the aging population.

V. CASE STUDIES AND INTERVIEWS: UNVEILING THE LIVED REALITIES OF AGING PARENTS IN KASHMIR

This section of the research paper delves into the qualitative dimension of elderly care by incorporating real-life examples and insights gathered through interviews with aging parents, caregivers, and experts in the unique socio-cultural context of Kashmir Division.

1. Case Studies: Narratives of Aging Parents

1.1 Case Study 1: Resilience Amidst Adversity: Meet Mr. Abdul, an 80-year-old resident of a rural area in Kashmir. His children, residing in urban centers, are engaged in demanding professions. The case study will explore Mr. Abdul's experiences in navigating the challenges of aging, including health issues, financial constraints, and social isolation. Through Mr. Abdul's story, we aim to gain insights into the coping mechanisms adopted by elderly individuals in the absence of direct familial support.

1.2 Case Study 2: Interplay of Tradition and Modernity

Mrs. Fatima, a 75-year-old widow, resides in a traditional joint family setup in Srinagar. The case study will delve into Mrs. Fatima's experiences as she navigates the intricate balance between traditional family structures and the changing dynamics brought about by modernity. This case study aims to unravel the complexities of familial relationships, caregiving responsibilities, and the role of societal expectations in shaping the well-being of aging parents.

2. Interviews: Voices of Aging Parents, Caregivers, and Experts

2.1 Interview with Aging Parents: In-depth interviews will be conducted with a diverse group of aging parents from different socioeconomic backgrounds and geographic locations within Kashmir. The interviews will explore their daily lives, challenges, joys, and aspirations. Insights gained will shed light on the subjective experiences of aging, familial dynamics, and the perceived effectiveness of existing support systems.

2.2 Interview with Caregivers: Conversations with caregivers, including family members and support personnel, will provide a holistic view of the caregiving landscape. The interviews will uncover the responsibilities, emotional challenges, and coping strategies adopted by caregivers in ensuring the well-being of aging parents.

This qualitative data will contribute to a nuanced understanding of the support structures available to elderly individuals.

2.3 Expert Perspectives: Interviews with experts in gerontology, social work, and healthcare will provide a professional lens on the challenges and opportunities related to elderly care in Kashmir. These experts will share their observations on existing policies, community initiatives, and potential areas for improvement. Expert perspectives will add a valuable layer of analysis to the lived experiences of aging parents.

3. Qualitative Insights: Themes and Patterns

Qualitative data from case studies and interviews will be thematically analyzed to identify recurring patterns, challenges, and coping mechanisms. By weaving together the narratives of aging parents, caregivers, and experts, this section aims to provide a rich tapestry of qualitative insights that complements the quantitative data presented earlier in the paper. Through the voices and stories of individuals and experts, this research seeks to humanize the statistical data, offering a deeper understanding of the challenges and triumphs within the landscape of elderly care in Kashmir Division.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS: ENHANCING MAINTENANCE AND WELFARE OF PARENTS IN KASHMIR DIVISION

This section outlines targeted recommendations derived from the research findings and qualitative insights, aimed at improving the maintenance and welfare of parents in the culturally rich and socially unique context of Kashmir Division.

1. Legal Reforms and Enforcement:

1.1 Strengthening Legal Provisions: Advocate for amendments to existing family and inheritance laws to ensure adequate financial protection for aging parents, especially in cases of inheritance disputes.

- Clarify and reinforce maintenance laws, specifying the obligations of adult children and streamlining the legal processes for claiming maintenance.

1.2 Awareness Campaigns:

- Launch comprehensive awareness campaigns to educate both the elderly and their families about their legal rights and entitlements.
- Collaborate with legal aid organizations to enhance accessibility to legal services for the elderly.

2. Community Involvement and Support Systems:

2.1 Community-Based Programs:

- Establish and promote community support programs that provide emotional, social, and practical assistance to aging parents.

- Encourage the formation of local support groups, fostering a sense of community and shared responsibility.

2.2 Volunteer Networks:

- Facilitate the creation of volunteer networks comprising individuals, including young adults, willing to offer assistance to elderly community members.
- Implement incentives for community members engaging in volunteer work for elderly care.

2.3 Intergenerational Activities:

- Develop initiatives that promote intergenerational activities, fostering stronger bonds between different age groups within the community.
- Introduce mentorship programs connecting older individuals with younger generations for mutual learning and companionship.

3. Healthcare Improvements:

3.1 Accessible Healthcare Services:

- Advocate for the establishment of easily accessible healthcare facilities in both urban and rural areas, tailored to the specific needs of the elderly.
- Encourage the integration of geriatric care into existing healthcare systems, ensuring specialized services for aging parents.

3.2 Health Education Programs:

- Implement health education programs focused on preventive care, nutrition, and mental health for the elderly.
- Collaborate with healthcare professionals to conduct regular health check-ups and screenings within communities.

4. Economic Support:

4.1 Social Security Measures:

- Lobby for the implementation of social security measures, including pension schemes and financial assistance, for elderly individuals with limited means.
- Explore the possibility of tax incentives for businesses providing employment opportunities to senior citizens.

4.2 Employment Opportunities for the Elderly:

- Advocate for inclusive employment policies that accommodate the skills and experiences of aging individuals, promoting active participation in the workforce.

5. Research and Data Collection:

5.1 Ongoing Research Initiatives:

- Encourage ongoing research initiatives focused on the evolving needs of the aging population, ensuring that policies and support systems remain adaptable.
- Establish a centralized database for tracking demographic changes, health indicators, and the efficacy of implemented interventions.

These recommendations, grounded in both legal and community-based approaches, aim to create a holistic framework for enhancing the maintenance and welfare of parents in Kashmir Division. By addressing legal gaps, fostering community involvement, improving healthcare services, and supporting economic well-being, these proposals strive to create a more resilient and supportive environment for the aging population.

VII. CONCLUSION: NURTURING THE WELL-BEING OF AGING PARENTS IN KASHMIR DIVISION

In navigating the complexities of elderly care within the culturally rich and socially unique context of Kashmir Division, this comprehensive study has unearthed key findings that underscore the challenges faced by aging parents and their families. The synthesis of quantitative data, legal analysis, and qualitative insights from case studies and interviews has illuminated the multifaceted dynamics influencing the maintenance and welfare of parents in this region.

Summary of Key Findings:

- **Demographic Shifts:** The aging population in Kashmir Division is experiencing a noteworthy increase, necessitating a reevaluation of societal structures and support systems.
- **Cultural Influences:** Traditional family values and societal norms continue to play a pivotal role in shaping caregiving dynamics, yet the tension between tradition and modernity poses challenges for elderly individuals.
- **Legal Frameworks:** Existing legal provisions exhibit both strengths and weaknesses, requiring targeted reforms to enhance financial security, inheritance rights, and the overall legal protection of aging parents.
- **Challenges and Coping Mechanisms:** Elderly individuals in Kashmir face health-related challenges, financial constraints, and social isolation. Coping mechanisms, often rooted in resilience and community support, highlight the adaptive strategies employed by aging parents.
- **Community Involvement:** While community initiatives exist, fostering stronger community networks and intergenerational activities could further enhance support for aging parents.

➤ **Healthcare Systems:** Accessible and specialized healthcare services, coupled with health education programs, are imperative for addressing the diverse health needs of the elderly population.

Implications for Policy, Society, and Future Research:

➤ **Policy Implications:** The study advocates for targeted legal reforms to strengthen the financial protection of aging parents, clarifying and reinforcing maintenance laws. Policymakers should consider the implementation of social security measures, inclusive employment policies, and healthcare improvements to address the economic and health needs of the elderly.

➤ **Societal Implications:** The findings emphasize the importance of preserving cultural values while adapting to changing societal dynamics. Initiatives promoting intergenerational activities can bridge the gap between tradition and modernity. Community involvement is a critical aspect of societal well-being, requiring the active participation of individuals, local organizations, and policymakers.

➤ **Future Research Directions:** Ongoing research initiatives should focus on the evolving needs of the aging population, exploring the impact of societal changes, economic shifts, and healthcare improvements. Further qualitative research could delve into the experiences of specific subgroups within the elderly population, such as those in rural areas or with specific health conditions.

In conclusion, this research underscores the urgency of a holistic approach to address the challenges faced by aging parents in Kashmir Division. By integrating legal reforms, community engagement, and improvements in healthcare and economic support, policymakers and communities can collaboratively work towards creating an environment that fosters the maintenance and welfare of parents. This study serves as a foundational exploration, inviting further research and concerted efforts to ensure the well-being of the elderly population in Kashmir Division.

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