# ELDER ABUSE; IN RELATION TO TYPES OF AGEING AND THEIR DEPENDENCE ON CAREGIVERS

Amandeep Singh

Assistant Professor in Sociology

Department of Evening Studies- MDRC

Panjab University

Chandigarh

*Abstract*

*Elder abuse is a widespread social issue that poses a threat to the elderly population. Ageing is a social and cultural phenomenon in addition to a medical or biological one. Every society has a unique view of ageing and age-related categories. Through the process of socialization, society makes sure that social and cultural values are passed down from one generation to the next and gives its members the opportunity to learn the required skills, values, and conventions, among other things. Individual personalities are shaped by socializing. Depending on the personality type that individual possesses, society will respond to them differently. Similar to that, the present study aims to comprehend how an elderly person's personality makes them more likely to experience abuse. The study aims to determine whether the elderly's personality or type of ageing has anything to do with the abuse they experience.*

*Keywords: Elder abuse, Ageing, personality, types of ageing, dimensions of ageing.*

## Introduction

Due to their inability to care for themselves and need for the assistance of family members or medical professionals, the elderly is more susceptible to a variety of elder abuse. The present study tries to understand the problems of elderly by studying the types and dimensions of Ageing which further leads to elder abuse. The study tries to understand the personalities of the elderlies. It tries to link an elderly's personality and their vulnerability to abuse.

Each person ages naturally during the course of their lifetime. Gray hairs, wrinkled skin, loose teeth, using a walking stick, and a bent back are ways that we represent ageing. Since a person gains wisdom, experience, and the capacity to make wise decisions with age, ageing is actually seen as a matter of honor. It wouldn't be incorrect to suggest that experience makes a person more mature. Aged people were once revered as a family's treasure, and both the family and society treated them with respect and honor. However, as society develops, the status of the old declines. They are now viewed as an unnecessary burden that children are not

prepared to carry. Growing older causes a variety of issues, such as physical and economic issues that result from the elderly being completely dependent on their children.

Elder abuse is a direct consequence of elderly's total reliance on their children. Only a small percentage of senior people have the capacity to manage ageing properly and defend themselves against the threat of elder abuse, which is perpetrated by children and caregivers. Abuse comes in a wide variety of forms, including economic, emotional, sexual, psychological, and physical. These are the issues that older people deal with as they get older and which they avoid discussing with friends and authorities out of concern for social stigma.

According to Comfort (1960), ageing is the process of losing strength and becoming more susceptible to death as we get older. The elderly population of society is defined as those over the age of 60. The lifespan of a human was traditionally thought to be 100 years, and it was divided into four periods in Indian society. This division was designed with the idea that each person should grow in their personal, social, and spiritual capacities (Marya, 2013). By placing particular emphasis on their hardship in the state of Maharashtra, Kumudini Dandekar (1996) makes an attempt to illustrate the conditions of the elderly in India. It is presumable that they deal with a range of issues, such as financial, health, non-working status, a lack of independence, a clash of lifestyles, generational differences, and so forth. Kapoor, A.K. and Satwanti Kapoor (ed. 2004) in their book "India's Elderly: A Multidisciplinary Dimension" makes an effort to develop a multidisciplinary approach to understanding the issues of the elderly, the ageing process, and planning for their rehabilitation in different environmental zones in India. It also offers guidelines to those who are involved in the cause and care of the elderly population in rural, urban, and tribal areas of the nation. Patel, Sarjoo and Veena Gandotra (ed. 2011) in the book "Ageing: An Interdisciplinary Approach" concentrated on the issues with elderly people everyday routines and differences in clothes, eating, and daily activities preferences.

**THE CONCEPT OF AGEISM**

Every stage of life, including infancy, childhood, adolescence, and adulthood, is distinguished by distinct developmental activities, suitable abilities, responsibilities, and opportunities. Ageing is a natural, lifelong process. The final stage of this ageism phenomenon is old age. [1]Ageism is the term for discrimination towards elderly people. Robert Butter, the first director of the U.S. National Institute on Aging, originally used the term "ageism" in 1969. Ageism is a problem that is impacting more and more people as the elderly population rises as a result of medical improvements and better health. Ageism is the term used to describe the unfavorable stereotype of the aged and its behavioral expressions. Ageing is a socially restricted process. It

---

[1] Lynn McDonald and K.L. Sharma, "Introduction", In Lynn McDonald & K.L. Sharma (eds.), Ageism and Elder Abuse, Rawat Publication, New Delhi, 2011, p.1. Also available at: http://www.gerontologyindia.com/downloads/IJG-21(2).doc .

is intended to convey the idea that older people may be less active not due to biological factors or the ageing process but rather because they are expected to project an image of lethargy.

R.P. Mohanty (2004) defined ageing as "Growing older and older naturally occurs as we age. It is an inescapable truth. By various authors, it is defined in various ways."

[2]Muttagi explains "Ageing is described as a multifaceted process, and it is made clear that ageing in the demographic sense differs from the biological process of ageing. He also holds that growing older is typically accompanied by exhaustion, a loss in the body's organs' functioning capability, and a decrease in one's capacity to handle stress from illness or trauma."

Jain, Sushila (2006) 'Globalization and the Aged' states that "The study of the elderly and ageing is concerned not only with the physical process of ageing but also with social and cultural aspects of ageing."

## 1. TYPES OF AGEING

[3]Susan Richard classified older people into five groups in 1962 based on how they handled the ageing process.

### 1.1 Mature type of ageing

[4]There are no disputes among this group of elders. They don't have any interpersonal problems. They have come to terms with the fact that they are now elderly. Contended persons are this kind of people. They are capable of coping with the situation at hand and responding appropriately; they do not harbor any regrets about the past.

### 1.2 Self-hater type of ageing

[5]This particular group of older people has a tendency to blame themselves and view life negatively. They believe that life is enjoyable up to the age of 60, after which it becomes monotonous due to a lack of goals and employment opportunities to provide for basic needs. Dependent entirely on others, whether it is for social or health issues. They hold themselves accountable for their inability to take care of themselves and others. These elderlies lack self-confidence, which further leads to anxiety and depression. Bose (2000) discovered that emotional turmoil and unhappiness are common among the elderly. They have negative

---

[2] R.P. Mohanty, "Ageing and The Aged: An Overview", In: A.K. Kapoor and Satwanti Kapoor (eds.), India's Elderly: A Multidisciplinary Dimension, A Mittal Publication, New Delhi, 2004.

[3] Tapan Benerjee, Senior Citizen of India: Issues and Challenges, Rajat Publication, New Delhi, p.9

[4] Tapan Benerjee, Senior Citizen of India: Issues and Challenges, Rajat Publication, New Delhi, p.9

[5] Tapan Benerjee, p.9.

feelings about themselves as a result of their unemployment, poor income, deteriorating health, newly added fears and feelings of abandonment, loss of importance in the family, feelings of inadequacy, loneliness, and unwantedness.

### 1.3 Angry type of ageing

[6]This particular group of seniors blame others and are unable to accept their advanced age. Elderly of this type reside in the middle class, who don't have the same means as wealthy individuals to slow down ageing They consistently attribute their woes on others. These individuals are annoyed and uncontended individuals who have complaints about everything that occurs in their lives. Fighting with family members at home results from complaining about others. Family conflict can result in arguments, rage, and abuse of the elderly by caretakers.

### 1.4 Armored type of ageing

[7]To guard themselves against the worries of ageing, these elderlies have a well-developed system of defenses. This group consists of highly educated, affluent families with the financial means to control the signs of ageing through the use of pricey cosmetics and other strategies. Their way of life also includes eating healthfully and engaging in exercise or yoga to keep their bodies in good shape.

### 1.5 Rocking chair type of ageing

[8]These elderly people are generally passive and dislike being active as they become older. They view this age as the prime period for leisure. These older people are free from obligations, which entails voluntarily relinquishing the position of household leader with the authority to make decisions and do household chores in exchange for financial support.

### 2. DIMENSIONS OF AGEING

Ageing Dimension refers to a few key characteristics of ageing divided into three main groups. Ageing generally has three major dimensions, each of which is connected to the others. These include social dimension, psychological dimension, and physiological dimension.

---

[6] Tapan Benerjee, p.9.

[7] Tapan Benerjee, p.9.

[8] Tapan Benerjee, p.9.

### 2.1 Social dimension

As a person ages in society, they acquire more advanced knowledge and assume more responsibilities and duties. This process is known as social ageing. Every society view ageing and age groups differently. Through socialization, a society ensures that social and cultural values are passed down from one generation to the next and enables its members to acquire the essential knowledge, skills, and standards, among other things. As a person advances from one age grade to the next, he takes on new roles in accordance with accepted customs. Roles, privileges, and expectations associated with age are set by society. Thus, social ageing refers to the part of an individual's life span that is viewed as old age by the group, as opposed to biological and psychological ageing.

### 2.2 Psychological dimension

[9]Losing mental capacity is a phenomenon known as psychological ageing. Most frequently, psychological pressure or disturbances cause young people to appear older than they are, and this unnatural process is reflected in their bodies. One of the main issues with ageing is the shock of getting older. The realization that we are ageing may come as the biggest shock of our lives. Because of the psychological trauma that is associated with this "shock," the person's remaining life course is unavoidably hardened, and they age considerably more quickly than would otherwise be the case. The three main stressors that play a large part in ageing are: (i) Isolation among the elderly; (ii) The reduction of the elderly's position in the family; and (iii) Expectations.

(i)    Isolation among the elderly: When a person, especially an elderly person, feels cut off from communication lines, sidelined, or excluded from events, this is known as playing the role of isolation. Being demoted from their former position of prominence, where they were the family's primary advisor and decision-maker, could have detrimental effects on their wellbeing. The result could be boredom and loneliness. There is a lot of satisfaction in seeming uselessness. Inappropriate treatment, deprivation, neglect, financial abuse, verbal abuse, psychological violence, and physical abuse are only a few of the many distinct types of abuse, according to Kapur (1997). Deprivation includes denying the older one's affection, care, concern, understanding, and ignoring their material and emotional needs.

(ii)    The reduction of the elderly's position in the family: An aged person who is still working or living an active life plays a variety of roles in society and does so in accordance with his abilities and capacity. Role erosion occurs as he loses his numerous positions and responsibilities as he ages. The variation in social structure and family relationships are combined with deterioration. In circumstances of role erosion, one may also observe significant changes in one's employment

---

[9] A.P. Bali, "Well Being of the Elderly", Social Change, 1999, 29, pp. 1-2

situation and economic transition. This frequently leads to a significant number of dependences (a break from independence). As dependence brings vulnerability, early conceptions of elder abuse, according to Heisler (2007), focused on the pressure placed on caregivers. According to this theory, the victim's dependence on the caregiver causes stress for the latter, which in turn causes the dependent elder to be abused or neglected.

(iii)    Expectations: Due to their birth or membership in a certain family, each member of the family is expected to fulfil a specific set of tasks. Role actors occasionally submit themselves to evaluation in line with their expectations for the role being portrayed. The well-being of the elderly may be affected if there is a perceived conflict between the role expectations. This could happen if an elderly person expects a particular amount of assistance or care but does not reciprocate. Such circumstances may negatively impact senior citizens[10].

### 2.3 Physiological dimension

[11]Biological processes result in physiological ageing. It is a cycle of growth and decay in which both physical and mental changes take place. In the early years of life, "growth" typically predominates the changes that occur in physiological ageing's visual appearance, as in old age skin is wrinkled, head and body hair become grey, tooth falls out, etc. In addition to these visible changes, the body also experiences some internal, non-visual alterations. The immune system, heart and circulatory systems, digestion and neurological systems, endocrine and reproductive systems, skeletal and respiratory systems, and kidney function all decline with age.

### Conclusion

The present study discovers that vulnerability results from dependence. Elderly people are more prone to abuse as they become more dependent on others. According to the study, a person's personality highlights how vulnerable they are to abuse. According to the varieties of ageing, elderly people who are furious or self-hating are more likely to suffer elder abuse. The study also highlights the aspects of ageing, demonstrating that the psychological component cannot be avoided. It demonstrated that acting out the role of isolation happens when someone, especially an elderly person, feels alone, alienated, or excluded from activities. Elder abuse can take many different forms, including deprivation, neglect, verbal abuse, and psychological aggression. A large number of dependencies result from not only neglect but also from the elderly person's status being diminished in the family and role degradation. And as dependency grows, so does one's vulnerability to abuse.

---

[10] K.K. Garguly, "Social and Health Perspective of Elderly", In A.K. Kapoor and Satwanti Kapoor (eds.), India's Elderly: A Multidisciplinary Dimension, A Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 2004, p. 71.

[11] R.P. Mohanty, "Ageing and the Aged: An Overview", In: A.K. Kapoor and Satwanti Kapoor (eds.), India's Elderly: A Multidisciplinary Dimension, A Mutual Publication, New Delhi, 2004, p.61.

## References

Bose, A. (2000). "Demographic Transition". Seminar. No 488. pp 35- 39.

Comfort, A. (1960). "Discussion session. I. Definition and universality of aging, [in:] The Biology of Aging". B.L. Strehler (ed.), AIBS, Washington. pp. 3-13.

Dandekar, Kumudini. (1996). "The elderly in India". New Delhi: Sage Publication.

Heisler, C.J. (2007). "Elder abuse". In R. C. Davis, A. J. Lurigio & S. Herman (Eds.) victims of crime. Pp 161-188. Thousand Oaks: Sage publications.

Jain, Sushila. (2006). "Globalization and the Aged". In Joshi, K. Arvind (eds). Older Persons in India. New Delhi: Serials Publications. pp. 33-46.

Kapoor, A.K. and Satwanti Kapoor. (ed. 2004). "India's Elderly: A Multidisciplinary Dimension". New Delhi: A Mittal Publications.

Kapoor, P. (1997). "Elderly Abuse: Some Counseling Tips". Research & Development Journal. 3 (3). 13-23.

Marya, N. (2013). "Socio-economic and health conditions of elderly in Punjab- An analysis". Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Patiala: Punjabi University.

Patel, Sarjoo and Veena, Gandotra. (ed. 2011). "Ageing: An Interdisciplinary Approach". New Delhi: Rawat Publication.

R.P. Mohanty. (2004). "Ageing and The Aged: An Overview". In: A.K. Kapoor and Satwanti Kapoor (eds.). "India's Elderly: A Multidisciplinary Dimension". New Delhi: A Mittal Publication. p.60.