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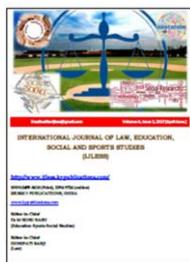**DONIPATI BABJI**
(Law)

Problems of Institutionalised Senior Citizens in Accessing New Technology

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ABSTRACT

Ageing is a Universal phenomenon. In modern society elderly became a social problem because the population of ageing increasing in worldwide. The changing family system cannot meet the needs of its elderly. The expectation of elderly and care of elderly is transformed to family from old age home. The Institutionalised aged people face many social problems. The main problems are low level of social network, economic insecurity and health problems. In this modern society face to face communication is reducing. Modern technologies help us to contact others in fraction of second. But elderly face some practical problems to access the modern devices. So that, the present study analyse the problems of Institutionalised elderly with modern technology.

Key Words: Old age, Institutionalised elderly, old age home, social network

Introduction

Aging is a natural and universal phenomenon. All living organisms including Man go through the process from conception to infancy, childhood, puberty, maturity and senescence. Old age is associated with changes and deterioration in structure and functions. The causes of these changes are biological and environmental, both socio-cultural and physiological changes. (Dayabati Devi and Amrita bagga2006). The ageing process is of course a biological reality which has its own dynamic, largely beyond human control. However, it is also subject to the constructions by which each society makes sense of old age. In the developed world, chronological time plays a paramount role. The age of 60 or 65, roughly equivalent to retirement ages in most developed countries is said to be the beginning of old age. In many parts of the developing world, chronological time has little or no importance in the meaning of old age. Other socially constructed meanings of age are more significant such as the roles assigned to older people; in some cases it is the loss of roles accompanying physical decline which is significant in defining old age. Thus, in contrast to the chronological milestones which mark life stages in the developed world, old age in many developing countries is seen to begin at the point when active contribution is no longer possible." (Gorman, 1999). Generally in Indian context a person is considered old when he/she attains the age of sixty and above.

Due to medical advancement the population of Aged people is increasing worldwide. According to data from *World Population Prospects: the 2015 Revision* (United Nations,2015), the number of older persons—those aged 60 years or over—has increased substantially in recent years in

most countries and regions, and that growth is projected to accelerate in the coming decades. Between 2015 and 2030, the number of people in the world aged 60 years or over is projected to grow by 56 per cent, from 901 million to 1.4 billion, and by 2050, the global population of older persons is projected to more than double its size in2015, reaching nearly 2.1 billion. Globally, the number of people aged 80 years or over, the "oldest-old" persons, is growing even faster than the number of older persons overall. Projections indicate that in 2050 the oldest-old will number 434 million, having more than tripled in number since 2015, when there were 125 million people over age 80.

   The changing pattern of Indian family system and its values project old age as a social problem. Urbanisation and nuclear family system cannot meet the care of elderly. Regarding that the importance of old age homes increasing in India. There are various types of old age homes in India. The major types are free and paid homes. Paid homes like charity, in this type of old age homes meet the needs of poor elderly at free of cost. In paid old age home, services are given by the basis of money. The concept of the old age home, though not very common in India, is not unknown. Help Age India estimates that there are 728 institutions at present, perhaps a majority of them in urban areas. More than 60% of the old age homes in India are of the charitable type, meant for destitute or very poor persons. About 20% of them are of the 'pay and stay' type and another 20% are mixed. About 15% of the homes were for women exclusively and Kerala state had the maximum number of homes (Help Age India, 2000).There is no clear statistics about number old age homes in India and its types. In Tamil Nadu the number of Old Age Home is mushrooming in cities. The problems of elderly and importance old age home to taking care of elderly also increasing. The number of older people is increasing throughout the world. As individuals grow older, they are faced with numerous physical, psychological and social role changes that challenge their sense of self and capacity to live happily. Depression and loneliness are considered to be the major problems leading to impaired quality of life among elderly persons. At the same time, old age can also be an opportunity for making new friends, developing new interests, discovering fresh ways of service, spending more time in fellowship with God. It can be happy and winsome or empty and sad — depending largely on the faith and grace of the person involved. Therefore, the present study was undertaken with the main purpose of studying the relationships among depression, loneliness and sociability in a group of elderly people and also to determine gender differences with respect to the above relationships of variables (Archana singh and Nishi Mishra, 2009). After entered into the old age home they loss their social network. The lack of social network is the main problem of aged. Electronic gadgets such as mobile phone in our daily lives have become important tools for all human. We can easily contact with others in a fraction of second. Mobile phone is useful for elders also. In old age home elderly can contact with their children and relatives through phone. But in present society elderly people face problems to use electronic items and communication devices. Noor Sakinahsniza Bt Zakaria (2013) expressed her study that age plays a role in adoption and uses of mobile technology. Elderly persons are less inclined to use mobile communication. However, they are catching up to the levels of mainstream innovation, but largely lag behind in the use of new services integrating into the technology. She also mentioned lack of experience with mobile, poor us usability and flexibility in latest mobile phones, less exposure to technology makes older people hard to catch up with latest mobile phone impacts older people in terms of perceiving their needs, setting their goal influence their innovation to cope according to new invention. Social networks and social support are increasingly recognised as important determinants of health in elderly people. The present study analyse about the problems of the institutionalised senior citizen in accessing mobile phone.

Methods of Data collection: In the present study 50 elderly inmates selected from four old age homes in Thanjavur District, Tamil Nadu. It comprises both free and paid old age home. Samples are selected on the basis of purposive sampling method. Those who are not interested to speak, bedridden, not able to answer are excluded from the study. Above 60 age, willing to answer are

selected for this study. The observation and interview have been used to collect the relevant information from the inmates. Semi structured interview schedule used as a tool in this research.

Objective of the Study

1. To study about the socio- economic condition of the Institutionalised Elderly
2. To find the problems of Institutionalised elderly with modern Technology.

Data Interpretation

i)   Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Respondents:

Out of 50 respondents   18% respondents are belongs to the age groups 60-69, 64% of the respondents belongs to the age group of 70-79, 12% of the respondents are belongs to 80-89 and remaining 6% of the respondents are under the age group of 90 and above. Aruna Dubey(2011), Akshay kumar(2012) in their studies related to institutionalised elderly revealed that the 71-80 years elders are high than 60-70years than 81-90 years.

Women elderly respondents (68%) are high than male respondents (32%) in these old age home. Most of the respondents are widow/ widower (82%). 8% of the respondents are married and 6% of the respondents are unmarried and remaining 2person was divorcee. Overwhelming percentage of the respondents belongs to the religion (92%) of Hindu, 6% of the respondents are belongs to Christianity and remaining 2% of the respondents are Muslims.

In this present study 76% of the respondents are belongs to Backward community, 18% of the respondents are belongs OC and 6% of the respondents are belongs to SC. No one comes under ST. 46% of the respondents are pensioners and 54% of the respondents are non-pensioners. Because of men non pensioners were worked in unorganised sector. And most of the women were lived as a house wives.

Senior citizens select paid old age home on the basis of their savings, pension and property.

ii)   Problems in accessing modern devices:

36% of the respondents have cell phone and remaining 64% of the respondents have no cell phone. Those who have not cell phone they said reasons like health problems (vision, deafness etc.,), don't have a people to contact, no interest to use cell phone. Those who have cell phone they also face some problems to use cell phones. Due to ageing ailments and infrastructure of the old age home it is difficult to maintain. They face difficulties like recharge, charging and how to contact customer care and short out their problems.

Some of the cell phone users said they don't make a call to others. They attend the incoming call only. 6% of the senior citizen's children settled in foreign. Among them they don't use the lap top and E-mail, video call etc., to contact their children in foreign. The language to use modern technical devices also restricts the senior citizens to use modern communication devices. The physical, psychological, economic Situation of the senior citizen also affects the communication process. Active participation of the youngsters can develop the involvement of senior citizen.

Some of the institutionalised elders said they don't have frequent visitors and contact person by phone. Nobody have interest to talk with them.

Conclusion

Ageing is an unavoidable condition in life. But the successful ageing is possible through regular practice and preparedness. In India parents spend all their earning for their children. They don't prepare for their future life economically, psychologically and socially and save for the same. Our social practices also don't give importance to the preparation. The institutionalised elderly have faced difficult problems to access the technology for easy communication process. Technology creates the generation gap. This study clearly shows that there is no relationship between education and using modern device. There is no proper learning centre for elders. Apart from education some other factors are essential for access modern technology. It includes requirement, interest, economic

condition, privacy in living place, encouragement of others etc. This sociological study clearly shows that social network of the elderly can give mental satisfaction to the inmates. Frequent communication is essential for create and maintain social network of the elderly. But they are ignored by their children and neighbours. Elder friendly technological devices are essential for their easy access. Government should give importance to elderly in communication process. They need some training to access the modern technologies. Old age home management should encourage the communication of the inmates with other inmates and their family members.

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