



ABUSE AGAINST URBAN ELDERLY IN DOMESTIC SPHERE WITH REFERENCE TO TELANGANA STATE, INDIA

Hima Keren Paul T

Research Scholar, Department of Social Work,
Osmania University, Hyderabad, Telangana State – 500 007.
Email : himakeren6@gmail.com

Abstract: When we look in to the recent census reports, 60.3% of the population fall under 15 – 59 Yrs age group category and above 60Yrs is 8.6%. This statistics reveals the raise of elder population in the country. Since ancient times the problem of abusing elderly is existing, in the current scenario elderly are not receiving due respect from the family members, affection, care, health care facilities, even proper security. Not like domestic violence against women, child abuse the said problem has not received proper attention; it remained as a private matter, hidden from the view of public. Our society is not considering disrespecting elderly as a problem and moreover neglecting them. Majority of domestic violence against elderly have not been reported due to the helplessness and dependency of the victims. In recent days only a few are reporting to the concerned authority for justice. The worst thing about elderly abuse is most of the times the perpetrators are family members, blood relatives and close relatives.

Key Words: Community Support, Domestic Sphere, Elderly abuse, Telangana State and Urban Elderly.

1. INTRODUCTION :

Domestic violence against elderly is a harsh reality of current scenario of our society. Experiencing abuse from family members, relatives, neighbors and near and dear, even from the care givers is the worst situation of a person's life. The apathetic attitude of family members and society towards elderly is making the lives of elderly pathetic. It is painful to see the people suffering who nurtured us, but in reality elderly are pathetically begging for a little affection from their children and family members. Elderly abuse is taking place not only in family setting but also in the non – family settings also. In majority cases family members, relatives, strangers and formal care givers commit it. The present young generation is considering elderly people as redundant, useless and a hectic burden to the society. Elderly are experiencing violence in all the segments of our society. According to a study conducted by HelpAge India (2014) reveals that - irrespective of religion, race, financial or social class, health condition and their role in their respective family, majority of elderly are experiencing domestic violence. The major reasons behind elderly abuse are economic and emotional dependency of the victims, helplessness, ego clashes etc.

2. OBJECTIVES :

The objectives of the study are -

- To know the causes of domestic violence against elderly.
- To know the types of domestic violence against elderly.
- To examine the reasons behind not reporting against elderly abuse.
- To study the relation of perpetrators with the victims of elderly abuse.
- To know the awareness of elderly on rights of senior citizens.



3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This paper is based on empirical data and a review of secondary data on the problem and observations from a field study among urban elderly of Telangana State. The required data was collected with the help of professional Social Workers of different voluntary organization. An attempt was made to draw implications for Social Work practice and Research.

The study was a descriptive study, Conducted at various urban areas of Telangana State. Quantitative and Qualitative research techniques were adopted. Purposive Sampling technique was adopted to get samples, and the sample size was 350. In depth interviews were conducted to collect the data by using structured interview schedule. Statistical measures were adopted to analyze the data and were interpreted by using percentiles.

4. MAJOR FINDINGS :

After making a study of 350 respondents from different urban areas of Telangana State, the researcher draw the following inferences.

4.1. Living Arrangement of the Respondents

Table - 1

S. No	Living arrangement	Frequency	Percentage
01	With Family	99	28
02	Spouse	159	45
03	Alone	66	19
04	Relatives	26	08
Total		350	100.00

Table – 1 clearly interprets the living arrangement of the respondents. Among the respondents majority (45 per cent) are living with their spouse followed by 28 per cent with their family, 19 per cent staying alone and the rest 08 per cent are under their relatives protection.

4.2. Reasons of elderly abuse

Table – 2

S. No	Reason for elderly abuse	Frequency	Percentage
01	Emotional dependency	63	18
02	Economic dependency	31	09
03	Lack of adjustment / Ego problems	76	22
04	Changing ethos	39	11
05	Health / Addiction problem of abuser	29	08
06	Health/ Addiction problem of abused	31	08
07	Lack of Time / Patience / Work Pressure	51	15
08	Financial Problems	30	09
Total		350	100.00

Table – 2 clearly indicates the reasons for elderly abuse, among the respondents majority (22 per cent) reported that lack of adjustment and ego problems are the reasons behind elderly abuse and the other reported reasons are emotional dependency (18 per cent), lack of time / patience /work pressure (15 per cent), changing ethos (11 per cent), economic dependency (09 per cent), financial problems (09 per cent), health / addiction problem of abused (08 per cent), and finally health / addiction problem of abuser (08 per cent).



4.3. Elderly abuse – Reason for not reporting

Table - 3

S. No	Reason for not reporting	Frequency	Percentage
01	Family Reputation	87	25
02	No awareness on dealing such issues	110	31
03	Lack of confidence on ability of a person, authority or NGO dealing such issues	55	16
04	Ill health / Economic & Emotional dependency	98	28
Total		350	100.00

Table – 3 clearly explains the reason for not reporting against elderly abuse, majority (31 per cent) of the respondents reported that they are not having awareness on dealing such issues followed by 28 per cent reported that ill health /economic and emotional dependency is the reason behind not reporting, 25 per cent said that if they report family reputation will damage and the rest 16 per cent reported that they don't have confidence on ability of the person, concerned authority or a voluntary organization in dealing such issues.

4.4. Type of abuse

Table - 4

S. No	Type of abuse	Frequency	Percentage
01	Verbal Abuse	49	14
02	Physical Abuse / Beating	22	06
03	Disrespect	83	24
04	Neglecting / Isolation	65	19
05	Economic exploitation	88	25
06	Unwelcome sexual contact	01	0.28
07	Denial of basics / medicines/material abuse	42	11.72
Total		350	100.00

Table – 4 clearly interprets the types of abuse, what the respondents have been experiencing - among the respondents majority (25 per cent) reported that they have been experiencing economic exploitation and the rest are experiencing domestic violence in the following forms - disrespect (24 per cent), neglecting / isolation (19 per cent), verbal abuse (14 per cent), denial of basics / medicines / material abuse (11.72 per cent), physical abuse / beating (06 per cent) and unwelcome sexual contact (0.28 per cent).

4.5. Perpetrators

Table - 5

S. No	Perpetrators	Frequency	Percentage
01	Daughter – in – law	97	27.71
02	Daughter	42	12.00
03	Son	55	15.71
04	Son – in – law	75	21.42
05	Spouse	15	04.28
06	Relatives	44	12.60
07	Care giver / Servant	22	06.28
Total		350	100.00

Table – 5 clearly explains the perpetrators reported by the respondents. Among the respondents, daughter – in – law is reported by 27.71 per cent as the main perpetrator followed by son – in – law (21.42 per cent), son (15.71 per cent), relatives (12.60 per cent), daughter (12 per cent), care giver / servant (06.28 per cent) and spouse (04.28 per cent).



4.6. Frequency of abuse

Table - 6

S. No	Frequency of Abuse	Frequency	Percentage
01	Once in a Week	83	24
02	Once in a Month	128	37
03	Almost Daily	17	05
04	Very Rarely	64	18
05	Once in a Few Months	58	16
Total		350	100.00

Table – 6 interprets the frequency of abuse reported by the respondents. Majority (37 per cent) of the respondents reported that they are experiencing violence once in a month and the rest reported as follows 24 per cent once in a week, 18 per cent very rarely, 16 per cent once in a few months and 05 per cent reported daily they experience domestic violence.

4.7. Duration of facing Abuse

Table - 7

S. No	Duration of Facing Abuse	Frequency	Percentage
01	More than 20yrs	23	06.60
02	16 Yrs – 20 Yrs	82	23.42
03	11 Yrs – 15Yrs	73	20.85
04	05 Yrs – 10Yrs	68	19.42
05	Less than 5 Yrs	104	29.71
Total		350	100.00

Table – 7 clearly indicates the duration of abuse reported by the respondents in years. Majority (29.71 per cent) of the respondents reported that they have been experiencing domestic violence from less than 05 yrs and the rest reported as follows 23.42 per cent 16 Yrs – 20 Yrs, 20.85 per cent 11Yrs – 15 Yrs, 19.42 per cent 05 Yrs – 10 Yrs and 06.60 per cent more than 20 yrs.

4.8. Awareness on Rights of Elderly

Table - 8

S. No	Awareness on Rights of Elderly	Frequency	Percentage
01	Yes	112	32.00
02	Some extent	102	29.15
03	No	136	38.85
Total		350	100.00

Table – 8 clearly shows the awareness of elderly on their rights. Majority of the respondents (38.85 per cent) reported that they are not aware of their rights, 32 per cent of the respondents reported that they aware of their rights and the rest 29.15 per cent are some extent aware of their rights.

5. DISCUSSIONS :

Majority of the respondents are staying with their spouse as their children flew away for their academic and professional purposes. Due to nuclear family set up the aged couple are residing alone in their homes and compared to other respondents those who are living with their spouse are experiencing less domestic violence and in some cases not at all experiencing any abuse. The respondents residing with family members and relatives are experiencing more abuse when compared to the respondents residing alone or with spouse. The reasons are economically and emotionally they have strong dependency and bond with the perpetrators. The helpless situation is encouraging the perpetrators for more abuse.

Changing ethos are one more reason behind elderly abuse, in the past decades elderly used to get due respect from the society and from the family members, but in current scenario we are thinking elderly are useless and not



productive units of the society. Due to this kind of attitude and lack of patience the young generation is neglecting the elderly. In many situations the young generation is simply ignoring the opinions and interests of elderly.

“Daughter – in – law” is reported as the major perpetrator by most of the respondents. Ego clashes and power game between daughter- in – law and mother – in – law are the root causes of this kind of elderly abuse. Most of the respondents reported that daughter – in – law troubles the elderly by not giving proper food, medicine, isolating the elderly, not allowing children to the grandparents and verbal abuse. Some of the respondents reported that even servants and pets are getting better treatment and respect than them at home.

When it comes to reporting against elderly abuse, most of the respondents are silently bearing the violence due to their helpless situation and they are thinking that reporting will become a damage of family reputation. Than economic dependency, emotional dependency is dragging the elderly back from filing a complaint against perpetrators. Most of the respondents are thinking that elderly abuse is part our life style and society, and it happen to everyone. A strong belief in Karma siddhatha is one more reason behind this. In many cases community and even relatives are simply ignoring the issue as it is their family matter. In some cases the concerned authority is not responding properly and in many cases the victims of elder abuse don't have faith on the potential of the concerned person, authority and NGO's in dealing such issues. This reasons encouraging the perpetrators to practice more abuse against elderly in urban settings.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS :

- Establishment of Senior Citizen Cells is recommended under proper monitoring.
- Professional Social Workers and Voluntary organizations should initiate to overcome this social phenomenon.
- Community participation must be encouraged to deal elderly abuse issues.
- Through community campaigns and community youth associations, inter generation bonding programmes should be promoted.
- More elderly help lines should be established and the services should be available to every elder of our society.
- Empathetic and responsible attitude among younger generation should be inculcated through well designed education system.
- Policies dealing with elderly issues should be more strengthen.

7. CONCLUSIONS :

When we look into the official studies - domestic violence against elderly has been increasing. Changing ethos, ego clashes, economic issues and work pressure are the major reasons behind this. The present generation is not getting enough time to look after elderly, the busy life style and hectic professional life making them apathetic about their responsibility towards elderly of their family. Compared to rural areas urban elderly are experiencing more abuse. Reason behind this is nuclear family setup and not having neither relatives and nor friends nearby. Government has been taking many measures to avoid this by providing legal rights such as the MWPSA Act 2007 (Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens), Section 125 of Criminal Procedure Code (1973), Old age pensions to the eligible elderly, Concession in travelling, Health care etc. But still the problem is existing and increasing.

After making a study of 350 respondents from various urban places of Telangana State, the researcher draw the following inferences. Among the respondents majority are experiencing abuse by the family members. Financial problems, time factor, patience, health status and addiction problems of abused tops the list of reasons behind domestic violence against elderly, very less number of the respondents reported to the concerned authority regarding violence and the reason behind not reporting is helplessness, dependency of the respondents and family reputation is one more reason. Most of the respondents are not aware of their rights and exclusive services meant for them. Genuine effort of social workers, government authority and community concern, support and participation are more needed to overcome this problem.

In our society domestic violence against elderly is multi dimensional and multi layered based on the financial status, health condition and especially gender. Most of the elderly are accepting the violence as part of their life due to economic and emotional independency and family reputation. Elderly should aware of their rights and instead of bearing the abuse,



they can go for legal support. Government should encourage community participation and Professional Social Workers to deal such cases immediately.

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