

Aging and Elder Abuse in India

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Abstract: *“Trees grow stronger over the years, rivers wider. Likewise, with age, human beings gain immeasurable depth and breadth of experience and wisdom. That is why older persons should be not only respected and revered; they should be utilized as the rich resource to society that they are”*

India is considered as one of the world’s oldest cultural civilization, with the most diverse population. The population differs and is defined in terms of culture, customs, language, physical features and genetic architecture. Elders and the reverence for elders is one of the major components of Indian culture. It is rightly said that the best classroom in the world is at the feet of an elderly person as the meaningful lessons of life are pursued from her/him. Having an elder at home is a blessing for the family. Unfortunately, in contemporary lifestyle, many people look at them as a curse. Elders are considered as a burden by many, though an integral part of our culture yet are one of the most vulnerable members of the society, who sadly have to depend on their families for essentials and support. The condition of the elders is deteriorating with the changing pattern of life. Abuse and neglect of the elders is a common social problem internationally and even in India. In India, 8% of the population was recorded 60 years and above in 2011 census and it is expected to increase its share to 12.5 % to 20% by 2026 and 2050 respectively.[1]

With such a demographic transition in India, there are growing concerns against the elders and there is a big question as to their safety and security. Hence, there is an urgent need to focus on the aspects pertaining to abuse of the elders and ensure safety and security of the older people. There is also a need to rethink on the existing legal framework for the older people and establish a mechanism which can help to reduce the growing abuse against the elders and protect their interests and rights.[2].

Keywords: Elders.