

Abuse against Elderly Widows in India and Selected States: An Exploration

Authors : Rasmita Mishra, Chander Shekher

Abstract : Background: Population ageing is an inevitable outcome of demographic transition. Due to increased life expectancy, the old age population in India and worldwide has increased, and it will continue to grow more alarmingly in the near future. There are redundant austerity that has been bestowed upon the widows, thus, the life of widows is never been easy in India. The loss of spouse along with other disadvantaged socioeconomic intermediaries like illiteracy and poverty often make the life of widows more difficult to live. Methodology: Ethical statement: The study used secondary data available in the public domain for its wider use in social research. Thus, there was no requirement of ethical consent in the present study. Data source: Building a Knowledge Base on Population Aging in India (BKPAI), 2011 dataset is used to fulfill the objectives of this study. It was carried out in seven states - Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal - having a higher percentage of the population in the age group 60 years and above compared to the national average. Statistical analysis: Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to understand the level of elderly widows and incidence of abuse against them in India and selected states. Bivariate and Trivariate analysis were carried out to check the pattern of abuse by selected covariates. Chi-Square test is used to verify the significance of the association. Further, Discriminant Analysis (DA) is carried out to understand which factor can separate out group of neglect and non-neglect elderly. Result: With the addition of 27 million from 2001 to 2011, the total elderly population in India is more than 100 million. Elderly females aged 60+ were more widows than their counterpart elderly males. This pattern was observed across selected states and at national level. At national level, more than one tenth (12 percent) of elderly experienced abuse in their lifetime. Incidence of abuse against elderly widows within family was considerably higher than the outside the family. This pattern was observed across the selected place and abuse in the study. In discriminant analysis, the significant difference between neglected and non-neglected elderly on each of the independent variables was examined using group mean and ANOVA. Discussion: The study is the first of its kind to assess the incidence of abuse against elderly widows using large-scale survey data. Another novelty of this study is that it has assessed for those states in India whereby the proportion of elderly is higher than the national average. Place and perpetrators involved in the abuse against elderly widows certainly envisaged the safeness in the present living arrangement of elderly widows. Conclusion: Due to the increasing life expectancy it is expected that the number of elderly will increase much faster than before. As biologically women live longer than men, there will be more women elderly than men. With respect to the living arrangement, after the demise of the spouse, elderly widows are more likely to live with their children who emerged as the main perpetrator of abuse.

Keywords : elderly abuse, emotional abuse physical abuse, material abuse, psychological abuse, quality of life

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