

Role of family in geriatric care in modern phenomenon: An overview

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Abstract

Old age is considered as age nearing to death. Old Age is called as Second Childhood Period. (Uma, 2010). Family is the main concern during old age, Family acts as a social safety net for the elderly is fast eroding in India. Joint Family system holds a unique place in Indian society to care and support in physical, psychological, social, emotional, cultural and economic aspects. With the advent of the industrialization, urbanization and modernization, radical changes in the society, mainly affected Indian traditional joint family system and care of the elders was slowing shifting from family to society.

A study was conducted to understand the role of the family in care and support of the elders during present day phenomenon. The descriptive and explorative research design was adopted to carry out the study. Interview schedule as a tool adopted by using Family Environment Scale to elicit data from 60 elderly respondents living in joint or extended family system in Mysuru district of Karnataka state. Simple random sampling was used in selecting the respondents and Descriptive statistics was used to analyze data.

Study reveals that level of cohesion, level of acceptance and caring, level of independence and recreational orientation in the modern nuclear family is fast eroding due to the impact of industrialization, modernization, westernization, employment of women on par with men etc., affects the geriatric care in physical, psychological, social, cultural, emotional issues modern family system.

Social work profession is considered as useful profession in addressing the issues relating to geriatric care. Application of social work methods such as Case work, Group work, community organization and Social work researches can be conducted in focusing on the unraveled areas and help to improve the family care to care and support elders at the end of the life span.

Keywords: Old age, Joint family system, Geriatric care, Social work

1. Introduction

Old age is considered as age nearing to death or surpassing the life expectancy of human beings, and leads to end of the human life cycle. Ageing is a continuous, irreversible, universal process, which starts from conception end at the death of an individual. Age '60' is usually dividing line between middle age and old age. Old Age is called as Second Childhood Period. (Uma, 2010).

The 'elderly' or 'aged' or 'old' or 'senior citizen' are all terms referring to persons who are at the threshold of old age. According to Acri and Sharma, 2001 says 'Old age means physical liability, declining mental ability, the gradual giving up of role in social activities and a shift in economic status and moving from socio - economic independence to socio - economic dependence on others for support'.

Family is the main concern during old age; joint family system holds a unique place in Indian society. It is considered as the bedrock on which Hindu social organization is built. As Iravati Karve defines, Joint family is "a group of people who generally live under one roof, who eat food cooked at one hearth, who hold property in common and participates in common family worship and are related to each other as some particular type of kindred". In joint family system, an elder holds a special place and acts as a head of the family, holding property rights, control over younger generation, mutual rights and obligation and these undivided family acts as a place of recreation, satisfaction of basic needs, provides psychological, social support, helps in continuity of culture

etc., for elders.

But, as the year passes and world is becoming modernized, urbanized, industrialized, spread of education and employment results in the disintegrating of traditional joint family system to modern nuclear family system which compose of parents and their children and giving less scope for elders in modern nuclear family system. In such nuclear family system elders holds less space to perform their traditional roles and responsibilities, and feels as an empty nest due to spread of employment among the women, loneliness, lack of time to spend with their children and grandchildren mainly affected Indian traditional joint family system and care of the elders was slowing shifting from family to society.

Many studies have conducted related to the importance of family at last stage of human life span, but one such study stated that care-giving role of the family is affected mainly because of younger generation aspiration and intergenerational value changes. In such a situation, social and economic security for the elderly is shifted from family to government. (Cowgil, 1987) ^[2]

Richard, Banumati and Emmanuel, 1985 stated that looking after the elderly was considered as the traditional responsibility of the children in agricultural societies. But, with impact of industrialization, urbanization and modernization, multi-generational family has started to diminish where children of the elderly often live separately with their wives and children. In the process, many elderly

parents are forced to live by themselves alone or either depends upon institutionalized service such as old age homes or day care centers.

Family is considered as the basic and universal social unit which fulfils the human needs in society as it fulfill basic human needs as well as performs function such as social, economic, religious, cultural etc., the structure and functions of family now undergone a radical changes due to technological and economic superstructure of present society. (Bahadur and Dhawan, 2008).

Having this literature background, a study was conducted to understand the role of family in geriatric care and support in the modern day phenomenon.

2. Objectives of the study

The study aims is achieving the below said objectives.

1. To study the role of family in care and support of the elderly in modern days.
2. To gauge the effects of various development in the family system in geriatric care.
3. To assess the causes and impact of divided family system in modern phenomenon.
4. To suggest the effective remedial measures to improve psycho-social well-being among the geriatric population.

To achieve the above objectives, the study adopts descriptive

and explorative research design. Interview schedule as a tool adopted by using Family Environment Scale to elicit data from 60 elderly respondents living in joint or extended family system in Mysuru district of Karnataka state. Simple random sampling was used in selecting the respondents and Descriptive statistics was used to analyze data.

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1: Showing the Demography the elderly respondents.

Age – Group	60-69 years	70-79 years	80 years & above
Frequency	28	20	12
Percent	14.00	10.00	6.00

In the above table, demography of the elders considered for study was shown. Elders above the age group of 60 years were considered as respondents. The data from the above table shows the demography of the elders living in families, 14.00 percent of respondents are between the age group of 60-69 years, 10.00 percent of elderly respondents are between the age group of 70-79 years old and 6.00 percent of respondents are age group of 80 years and above. Thus, majority of the elders are between the age group of 60 years and above were considered for the present study.

Table 2: Showing the level of cohesion in modern nuclear family system.

Items	Agree		Disagree	
	F	P	F	P
Family members do not get along with each other.	14	7.00	-	-
There is no sense of closeness in our family	12	6.00	-	-
Whenever something needs to be done in the house, everyone joins in, happily	-	-	18	9.00
In family, sitting together and talking to each other was less.	16	8.00	-	-

(F=Frequency, P=Percent)

In the above table, level of cohesion in the modern nuclear family was shown. Togetherness is important for every relationship and living together was the basic feather of family. In nuclear family system, though family members are living together, the relationship, and interaction are diminishing between each other. 7.00 percent of respondents strongly agree for family members have no time to interact with others living in family, 6.00 percent of respondents express that diminishing closeness between family members, 9.00 percent of respondents show disagree opinion for family

members joins together to enjoy living together and 8.00 percent of respondents express that sitting and speaking between the family members was compared less in divided family system.

Thus, in modern nuclear family system, feeling of together was reducing due to long working hours, employment of women, advanced technology, urban lifestyle, urban traffic etc., creates an environment that elders are suffering from lack of social interaction from their loved ones, loneliness and feeling of empty nest in family.

Table 3: Showing the level of acceptance and caring in modern divided family system.

Items	Agree		Disagree	
	F	P	F	P
Lack of time and attention for elders in family	15	7.50	06	3.00
There is a reduced affection amongst family members	12	6.00	-	-
Reduced care and support from family members	08	4.00	-	-
No one bothers to look after elders in our family	12	6.00	07	3.50

(F=Frequency, P=Percent)

Level of acceptance and caring for elders in modern divided family was shown through above table, acceptance of old age and physical, psychological, social, and emotional caring is considered for psycho-social well-being. 7.50 percent of respondents agree for working age group in family spends limited time with elders, 6.00 percent of respondents agree for reduced care and affection among the family members in

nuclear family system as they have limited time in modern working environment, 4.00 percent of respondents expressed and agreed for the reduced care and support from family members and 6.00 percent of respondents agree for family members shows limited interest to look after elders as they considered elders as physical, psychological, social dependent on family.

Thus, in the modern divided family system level of acceptance and care and support for elders is diminishing compared to traditional joint family system mainly due to

spread of institutional support, migration of children and modern busy lifestyle?

Table 4: Showing the level of independence and recreational orientation in present family system.

Items	Agree		Disagree	
	F	P	F	P
Everyone is expected to accept all decisions made by elders are diminishing.	10	5.00	04	2.00
Living independent is increasing in family.	14	7.00	-	-
We often go out together for movies in our family	05	2.50	11	5.50
Our family members are just confined to other work	12	6.00	04	2.00

In the above table, level of independence and recreational orientation in present family was shown, 5.00 percent of respondents agree for decisions and opinion of elders are diminishing in modern family system due to level of independence is increasing in present generation, 7.00 percent of respondents agreed for increase independence among present generation is increasing and level of interdependence is decreasing in nuclear families, 5.50 percent of respondents disagree for lack of recreational orientation and 6.00 percent agreed for family members just confined to work by giving less scope to recreational facilities by family members to elders.

Thus, decision of the elders is carried out by family members was confirmed to traditional joint family system, as the level of independence is considered as important feature of nuclear family system which provide less scope elders roles and responsibilities to perform and give less scope for recreational orientation in modern divided family system.

4. Suggestions

Here, some of the suggestion to improve the psycho-social well- being in modern nuclear family system

1. Development of geriatric counseling centers.
2. Improvement of family welfare programme
3. Involving in simple vocational activities helps them to improve the psycho-social well-being of elders living in the family.
4. Non-government organization should arrange activities such as group work activities and carrying recreational activities to heal psycho-social problems.
5. Counseling to family members to give some time to the elders to improve their social well-being to heal their loneliness and isolation.
6. Following the religious ceremony, rituals, practices and helps to perform their social roles and responsibilities by the elders in family and creates an environment of Joint family system timely.
7. Useful programme in the television and media, sheet plays, dramas, musical programmes etc., is also considered as important.
8. Yoga, meditation and spiritual practices results positive and contented state of mind and make pain free body and improve well-being.
9. Practices of yoga and pranayamas improve sense of balance between the physical (body) and psychological (mind) aspects of elders to great extent.
10. Spirituality and its practices results in healthy behavior, which helps in psycho-social support, and also effective solution for stress, anxiety, fears, anger and frustration.

5. Social Work Intervention

Social work profession is considered as useful profession in solving the various programme among different age group, old age is such as Gerontological social work is a profession which dealing with the problems of elders. Various methods of social work such as case work, group work, community origination and social work research is helpful in solving the various problems of the elders in the modern family system. Social worker can act as case workers, group workers, community organizers, counselors, experts, and mediators etc. Primary methods of Social Work such as case work, group work and community organization can be very effective.

6. Conclusion

Thus, the present investigates the role of family care and support for elders is diminishing during these days to diverse problems and development. In traditional joint family system, elders were treated as the head of the family and have right to perform many roles and responsibilities, but, as the size of family is diminishing traditional function of elders is fast eroding and various development in societies posing in care and support for elders.

Non-adjustment to modern advanced lifestyle, migration of children, employment of women, lack of time of younger generation to spend time with grandparents, spread of institutional support, long working hours, urban life style, advancement in modern technology etc., posing problem in elder’s care and support by family in modern phenomenon.

Adjusting to the modern phenomena through different approaches, methods, therapy, up brining the welfare measures and social work intervention is considered useful to improve the care of elders by family, as family care is best care for promoting well-being at end of life span.

7. Reference

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