Well-Being of Elderly

S. Nagabhushana Rao

Associate Professor & Head (CESD) (Retd.), National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Rajendranagar, Hyderabad – 500030

I. INTRODUCTION

"Life is a priceless gift from God. Appreciate every minute of it".

The core of human life is a change of ageing. The change of age i.e., from child to senior citizen is a natural and universal phenomenon. Every stage of life is having pleasure and pain. According to world Health Organization, ageing is a course of biological reality which starts at conception and ends with death (Shilpa Amarya, et al, 2017).

According to the United Nations the senior citizens are people of 60 years of age. India also follows the same reference. The elderly population is fast growing in the world. In 2012 there are 819 million people are the age of 60 years i.e., 11 percent of the world population. In 2019, the elderly people are 1 billion and will be increased by 1.4 billion by 2030 and 2.1 billion by 2050 (WHO, 2022). According to 2011 census there are 104 million elderly people in India. By 2026 the number is expected to grow up to 173 million. The elderly people are the highest in human history and their contribution to human welfare is immense.

But the main concern is how well being is the process of ageing. According to Oxford English Dictionary well-being is the "the state of being comfortable, health or happy".In broad concept, the well-being referred as "moment-to-moment happiness" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2021). It means how satisfied the people are about their life. New Economics foundation describes well-being as "how people feel and how they function, both on a personal and a social level, and how they evaluate their lives as a whole" (New Economic Foundation, 2012).

It is difficult to measure the well-being. But well-being is related to quality of life. The indicators for quality of life are health, physical activity and social interaction. This implies that well-being is 'how the people manage their day-to-day life'. Well-being is the results of 'healthy lifestyle habits such as physical exercise, a healthy diet, restorative sleep, abstaining from tobacco and alcohol use' (WHO-2021).

II. FACTORS AFFECTING THE AGEING

Three factors affect the ageing. These are 1) Health, 2) Finances, and 3) Social Interaction.

Health: According to WHO, "Health is a state of physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being" (Mallika Tiruvadanan, 2022). Major risk of ageing process is developing a number of chronic diseases. Ageing is associated with many neurological disorders. When the age advances, the capacity of the brain to transmit signals and communication reduces. Loss of brain function is the biggest fear among elderly. Dementia (Dementia, 2022) is common with age. Around three percent of people between the ages of 65 and 74, nineteen percent between75 and 84, suffer from dementia (Mental Health, 2021). The other diseases are Alzheimer's disease, cerebrovascular disease, Parkinson's disease and Lou Gehrig's disease.Alzheimer's disease causes misbalance among the elderly by causing memory loss, changes in personality and behavior-like depression, apathy, social withdrawal, mood swings, distrust in others, irritability and aggressiveness.

Ageing process also causes visual impairment. Visual diseases that appear with age are cataracts and glaucoma. Cataract mostly develops among the elderly making vision blurry and eventually causing blindness if untreated. Glaucoma is another common visual disease appears in elderly people. Glaucoma is caused by damage to the optic nerve causing vision loss. There is no cure or fix for the damage once it happened to the vision. Prevention is the best measure in the case of glaucoma. Ageing is the greatest known risk. Around 1,50,000 people who die each day across the

world, about two-third i.e., 1,00,000 dies from age related issues (Wikipedia, 2021).

Finances: Ageing will result in dependency. The prime factor of ageing is reduced mobility. This makes the elderly to depend upon someone to help in their mobility. The most dependency syndrome is financial dependence. As the ageing increases, different health problems arise, and these health problems consume most of their finances. Financial dependence is the worst form of dependency. Virtually, they are at the mercy of their own children for finances. This makes them humble before their children.

According to a nation-wide survey conducted by Age-Well foundation, 65 percent of the elderly in India re dependent on others for their financial requirements and undergo financial crisis (The Hindu, 2021). The study findings says that pension was the main source of income for 38 percent of the respondents. More than four-fifths of the respondents said that their major problems were related to healthcare issues, where financial status lays a key role. The report finds that senior citizens aged over 70 are marginalized and isolated to a large extent. To quote from the report "Older persons in the category of 60-70 years are looked after well by their children, but with further advancement in their age, children find it difficult or they are unable to look after them because of their own growing age and ever-increasing responsibilities towards their own children" (The Hindu, 2021).

Finances play a vital role in ageing process. According to report, financially well-off older people do not wish to be dependent on government facilities for healthcare needs, they prefer private institutions for better services. Himanshu Rathi, the founder chairman of Age-Well foundation says that "Financially insecure old people expect social security, free health care and subsidies so that they can lead a comfortable and respectable life in old age. At the same time, older people with sound financial health look forward to risk-free investment schemes, so that they can earn good returns to meet financial needs in old age" (The Hindu, 2021). Finances are the most important in ageing process. Social security helps the people, particularly in rural areas.

Social Interaction: Social interactions play a vital role in keeping the day-to-day life actively. Social interactions are interactions with like-minded people. Social relationships provide greater satisfaction to the elderly people. As the people age, the elderly seen relationships that are most positive and rewarding. The elderly participate in social activities, which provides a greater satisfaction and make them busy in their ageing process. It is said that 'Ageing can be fun, if you do it with right people'.

Positive social relations reflect interactions among themselves and their social partners. The social relationships exist between multiple social partners. They influence upon one another. According to Social Input Model, social interactions help in treating elderly The social relations help the elders in positive and satisfying social experiences and to live better life.

Informal with interaction with elderly people was held in rural areas of Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh state, India. Most of the elderly people are above sixty and some of them are above 70 and 80. Among the elderly, there was an elderly women politician Smt. P. Shamantakamani, was present. She was a elderly and actively involved in political and social services, even at the age of 79. Interview was conducted with her and few elderly people present in the informal gathering regarding well-being of elderly people. Few questions were asked about the elderly people, their emotions, problems, life style in rural areas and their contribution to family and nation building.

Q. Why the elderly people are important?

Answer: The elderly people are main pillars of the family and the society. They are foundation of the family. Elderly people's love, affection, experience, patience helps in buildup of family. In other words, elderly people are corner stone on which family is built. Elderly people play an important role in helping the children and children's children. They take responsibilities in performing household tasks. Elder's wisdom and experience will guide the young. Moral and ethical values will be inculcated among the younger generations.

Q: What are the emotional needs of elderly?

Answer: The elders have emotional needs. Elderly fear about loneliness. This loneliness is fearsome and threat to their security. It is boredom, and it affects elderly health. The younger generation doesn't have time to take care of elders. In rural areas, family members migrate to the towns, leaving the elders in villages. The elder people require attention, love and affection from their children, young and grandchildren. There should be helping hand and

sense of security should be provided to the elderly people by the family members.

Q: How the family members can help the elderly to meet their needs?

Answer: Allow the elders to stay with children and grandchildren. Living with the children help them in emotional bond, which help them in maintaining good health, and security to enjoy the family life. Financial help is the dire need from children when they are suffering from health problems. Elders are shy in asking financial help, because they have spent the finances for the help of children's education and health. Sparing a time with the elders by the family members will help them to live happily.

The elders point out that "Loneliness is main enemy of elderly". P. Shamanthakamani says that "No one cares you although many people around you. No one will pay attention to you, although surrounded by many people". Elders need companionship. Young or their children should stay with them. Playing few games with elders help them emotional bond with the young and children. Family members must take care of elders to live in happy and peace. Elderly people expressed that children and grandchildren should spend some time with them.

Q: How the society can help the elders to meet their social / emotional needs?

Answer: Social life is very important. Social interactions provide emotional bonding and security to the people. Social relations help in health and improve communication skills and provide the confidence that they are together in pleasure and pain.

Q: What are the policies, elderly people can suggest to meet the needs of elderly?

Answer: Increase the old age pension to meet their food and health needs. Create more old age homes in villages, towns and districts. This will help them to live near to their villages. Nutritious food like eggs, milk, fruits and bread should be provided in old age homes. Help them with economic activities, according to their ability and interest to contribute to the society and to nation building.15 kgs of free rice should be provided to the elderly in rural areas. Free transport also helps them to visit hospitals in the cities and to visit to their relatives in other places. Mobile library may be arranged to study the books by the elderly.

III. CONCLUSION

The elderly people are continuously growing. By 2026, the elderly people are the highest in human history. As the life span increases, the elderly people are increasing in number. Joint families are breaking and the children migrating for better fortunes in the cities and to the abroad, loneliness hunts the elderly. Loneliness is the worst disease in present day world. Precious life, spending with children and grandchildren was disturbed due to break up of the joint families. The elders are having skills, experience, knowledge and wisdom and the main concern is how to utilize their services. In Japan, the elderly live longer. Elderly is treated with utmost respect and several generations live together. This is one of the reason elderly live longer in Japan. India, should focus on bring back joint family system, to provide dignified life to the elderly.

In recent past, change towards materialistic lifestyle has brought change of attitude towards elderly people. There is a wide gap exists between the young and the elders. The young do not want associate with the elderly. The age acts as a divide between the young and elderly. Young perceives that 'elderly are physically weak, mentally slow, disabled or helpless and unable to work'. Elderly people attitude also changed. Elderly perceive that 'they are a burden to the young, less valuable and isolating themselves from the mainstream of life'.

Change of attitude has brought less contribution of elderly people towards development of the society. Elderly needed emotional understanding of their needs and recognition of their valuable experience, wisdom and knowledge and skills towards development of the society. There is an urgent to improve well-being i.e., improve the quality of life of senior citizens and provide them with dignified life for better contribution to the society.

IV. POLICY ADVOCACY

The elderly people are repository of knowledge, wisdom, skill, experience and having moral and ethical values. The elderly are a rich treasure of the society and can help the younger generations and inculcate moral and ethical values to build a better society. The breakup of joint families has effect on family relations, and delinked the elderly from

children and grandchildren. Monitoring of young has slipped from the elders. As a result, many young people were trapped with bad habits like cigarette smoking, alcohol consumption and slowly addicted to the drugs and ruining their valuable life.

Field observations and discussion with elderly people points out that elderly would like to live with their children. Opportunities may be provided to the elders to live with their children either in the cities or in rural areas. This will protect them from loneliness and provide them with emotional security. This will also help elders to take care of grandchildren and nurture them as good citizens. Promotion of joint families will pave the way to build a better society, which is the dire need of present day.

Health: As pointed out by the elders, health is the foremost important issue of the elders. Elderly people suffer from many health ailments. Main lacuna is lack of access to health services. In rural areas, health facilities are not available for major health problems. The government should map the issues of health of elderly. Gram Panchayat can have the data base of health issues in general and in particular, health issues of elderly. This will help the elderly in specific health problems. Pandemic (COVID-19) has raised the issue of health emergency for all people, particularly elderly suffered the most. Free treatment should be provided to the elderly.

Health Care Technologies: Technology drives the human life and it has become an essential and integral component of day-to-day-life. Smart technologies have revolutionized the life of human beings. Technology has helped in quick communication and financial transactions. The robotic technology assistance has become an essential element in health care. Ageing process is associated with the chronic diseases and has profound implications on health care system.

This is the age of Artificial Intelligence (Artificial Intelligence, 2021). AI is the world's future technology. It is impacting virtually every industry and every human being. AI is revolutionizing the health care system, particularly in helping the elderly. It can predict health risks and help in personal care of elderly. Japan is having one in four are aged above 65. That is 28.7% of the population and 36.2 million are elderly in Japan.Japan is called as "Super Aged" society (Elderly in Japan, 2021). Japan would like to use AI in helping the elderly and addressing the aging population with "Society 5.0" AI technology.

Japan-Society 5.0: Japan using the AI technology to balance the economic development and society problem. This approach is called "Society 5.0". According to definition 'Society 5.0 is "A human-centered society that balances economic advancement with the resolution of social problems by a system that highly integrates cyberspace and physical space" (Society 5.0, 2022). In Society 5.0 product or service are tailored made to the needs of people. Japan feels that through 'Society 5.0' would like to overcome the social challenges like ageing population. The needs of elderly will be addressed through autonomous vehicles and drones. Human intelligent robots will help the age-old people in many ways, like robot will take care the need of aged people by serving them.

Remote health monitoring of elderly through wearable sensors: 'Ambient Assistive Living (AAL) has emerged as the new concept to help the elderly. AAL is a new living spaces, which combines social environment with the latest technology of products and services that enhances the quality of life. AAL is an application of technology in health care. It focuses on enabling independent living at home. AAL is the combination of many technological of Internet of Things (IoT). The IoT is a framework which connect several devices, systems and technologies to together to achieve tasks like health monitoring.

Early Intervention Practices (EIP) helps in health improvements among the elderly. Surveys in Europe and the United States indicate that patients prefer to undergo treatment in their homes than being hospitalized. Due to advanced technologies like smartphone applications, wearable devices and sensors a patient's well-being can be monitored remotely. Fitness tackers such as smart watches are one of the examples of health monitoring. These technologies have become essential in health care system for everyone.

Wearable Devices: Wearable devices like smartphone sensors will be connected to patient's body to collect physiological data. The sensors will measure health indicators like blood oxygen saturation, temperature, and heart-rate. If any abnormality is noticed, patient will be treated with early intervention practice (EIP) to recover from ill-health.

Cloud (Data Layer): The cloud is the place where the system data is stored and processed. Cloud receives

patient's data from smartphone over internet and the data is accessible for doctor. In disorder in patient's data will be reported. This facilitates in helping the patient for faster recovery.

The main lacuna is that these healthcare technologies have not reached the common man. These technologies may take few more years to reach the common man. The government can help the elderly by providing free health care to help the elderly live healthy life.

Financial Wellness: When people will reach old age, they exhaust all finances in helping their children for education and other needs. Most of them depend upon pension (if they are employees) or on their children's income. The elders feel insulted to take the financial help from their children. One young man mentioned that his mother has kept Rs. 50,000/- in cover under her bed and written that 'the amount is for death ceremony'. This shows that even after her death, she doesn't want trouble her children financially. But the ageing makes elderly to depend upon their children. They are in need of finances for their daily needs. The government must provide financial help through old age pension. The amount should be at least Rs. 5,000/- per month. Every year the amount should be enhanced to protect from inflation. This helps the elderly to survive in rural areas.

Free Transport: Elderly should be provided with free transport along with the companion in government transport and in railways. In case of health emergency, free ambulance services should be provided.

Old Age Homes: Construction of more old age homes may be done by the government in rural areas like blocks or towns. Along with the nutritious food, facilities like library and extracurricular activities may be arranged in old age homes. This will help elderly to spend day-to-day life with activities of their interest. In general, the elderly should not be seen as burden to the family / society. They should be treated with respect. After the long service to the family / society, they deserve a better life Need of the hour is humanness in treating the elderly. Their services can be utilized to build the better world.

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[4] New Economic Foundation (2012) "Measuring well-being: A guide for practitioners", London.

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[6] Mallika Tiruvadanan, (2022) "Fighting Pain", The Hindu Magazine, Sunday, October 16, 2022.

[7] Dementia is a chronic or persistent disorder of mental processes caused by brain disease or injury and marked by memory disorders, personality changes, and impaired reasoning. Dementia is a group of conditions characterized by impairment of at least two brain functions, such as memory loss and judgement. Symptoms include forgetfulness, limited social skills and thinking abilities so impaired that it interferes with daily functioning. (google.com/search/dementia, accessed on 17-10-2022).

[8] Mental Health, Dementia, (2021), https://www.mentalhealth.org/blog/what-wellbing, accessed on 29-9-2021.

[9] Alzheimer's disease is a progressive mental deterioration that can occur in middle or old age, due to generalized degeneration of the brain. It is the commonest cause of premature senility.

[10] Cerebrovascular disease refers to blood in the brain. The disease includes all disorders in which an area of the brain is temporarily or permanently affected by ischemia or bleeding and one or more the cerebral blood vessels are involved in the pathological process.

[11] Parkinson's disease is a progressive disease of the nervous system marked by tremor, muscular rigidity, and slow imprecise movement, chiefly affecting middle-aged and elderly people. It is associated with degeneration of the basal ganglia of the brain and a deficiency of the neurotransmitter dopamine.

[12] Lou Gehrig's diseases / Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), also known as motor neuron disease (MND) is a neurodegenerative disease that results in the progressive loss of motor neurons that control voluntary muscles. ALS is

the most common type of motor neuron disease. Early symptoms of ALS include stiff muscles, muscle twitches, and gradual increasing of weakness and muscle wasting.

[13] Wikipedia (2021), Ageing, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ageing, accessed on 1-10-2021.

[14] The Hindu (2021) "two-thirds of elderly financially dependent", HTTPs, accessed on 1-10-2021.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Artificial Intelligence (2022), https: www.google.search.com, accessed on 18-10-2022.

[18] Artificial Intelligence is a simulation of human intelligence in machines in machines that are programmed to think like humans. In other words, Artificial Intelligence is the ability of digital computer or computer-controlled robot to perform activities associated with intelligent beings. Artificial Intelligence is also applied to the machines that exhibits human straits like learning and problem solving.

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