

Content analysis of elder abuse cases reported in selected regional news papers

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■ **ABSTRACT** : The aim of the study is to do content analysis pertaining to elder abuse. 80 articles related to elder abuse were analysed from 2018 to 2019 to study the reasons for elder abuse. The information collected was analyzed using frequencies and percentages. The result revealed that different types of elder abuse were found as physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, financial exploitation, neglect and abandonment. The reasons for elder abuse were found as psychological and emotional abuse (56.25%), abuse by care givers (24.16%) mistreatment by their own children (14.32%) and improper medication (5.27 %).

■ **KEY WORDS**: News papers, Elder abuse, Senior citizen

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Elder Abuse' an issue one often refrains from talking about or acknowledging that it exists. But, within the four walls and confines of one's home, a dark reality pervades. Over the past few years Help Age India has been conducting detailed surveys to understand this growing crime against India's elders, by getting the elder perspective, their understanding and experiences. Shockingly, in 2014, half of India's elderly (50%) surveyed reported experiencing abuse. 77 per cent lived with their families.

At the national level, it has been found that 50 per cent of elders have experienced abuse personally while 83 per cent of elders reported that abusing is prevalent in society. It is also reported that 72 per cent of the abused elderly people belong to the age group 60–69 years, 25 per cent of them belong to the age group 70–79 years and only 3 per cent of them are of 80 or above 80 years.

Females (53%) reported a higher percentage of abuse cases in comparison with male elders (48%) (Govil and Gupta, 2016).

The National Crime Records Bureau in 2014 reported 18714 incidences of crime against senior citizens and as a whole the rate is 18.3 per cent in India. A study done by Agewell India on 2705 respondents revealed that 65.2 per cent of elderly respondents accepted that there is elderly neglect. More than half (54.1%) of the respondents said that older persons suffer elder abuse either in their families or society. One in every fourth elderly admitted that they are being exploited by their family members themselves. Majority of the respondents faced mistreatment due to financial reasons (89.7%) and emotional factors (96.4%). The elderly in urban areas were neglected more than in the rural areas.

In a study done by Punita Govil in 2014, 44 per cent

of elderly abused people lived with their only son and daughter-in-law, 25.1 per cent with their son's family and daughter, 9.9 per cent live with their daughter and son-in-law, 8.9 per cent live in large joint family, 7 per cent live with spouse or alone; while 2.3 per cent live with their son or daughter and for the remaining 2.8 per cent precise assessment could not be done. It is also noticed that 72 per cent of the abused elderly people belong to the age group 60 – 69 years, 25 per cent of them belong to the age group 70 – 79 and only 3 per cent of them are of 80 years or above 80. At the national level, it has been found that 50 per cent of the elders have experienced abuse personally, while 83 per cent of the elders reported that abuse is prevalent in the society. In 2013, the ratio of personal experience of abuse was 23.10 per cent. It depicts that cases of elder abuse have increased rapidly in one year.

As a part of this the cases of elderly abuse was collected in the enadhu and andhrajyothi newspaper from 2018-2019 in Andhra Pradesh with the following objectives:

- To do the content analysis of the articles related to elder abuse.
- To explore the reasons of elder abuse.

RESEARCH METHODS

Articles related to elder abuse were collected from the selected regional news papers. The articles published from 2018 to 2019 were selected. The facts about the incident, the background of the victim, persons involved in the harassment, types of abuse, age group etc. were collected from the articles. Leading popular regional language (Telugu) daily news papers of Andhra Pradesh were selected. 80 elderly abuse news items which took place in different parts of Andhra Pradesh reported in the newspaper formed the data for analysis.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

As per the survey, every second senior citizen is being harassed or mistreated or humiliated by their own family members, children, relatives and others, there are few reliable statistics regarding this incidence. In the survey of elderly abuse where the data was collected from the leading news papers of Andhra Pradesh from the year 2018 to 19. It was clearly indicated that majority of the elderly abuse was of age group 65-85 years above where the cases was due to various reasons such as

psychological and emotional abuse formed 56.25 per cent and the main reason of this was criticizing and blaming the elders by their own family and others to be formed 56.5 per cent and another common characteristics of elderly was due to caregivers formed to be 24.16 per cent and the reason was found to be neglect in food, clothing and comfort formed 24.16 per cent and another characteristic of the case was mistreat by own children showed 14.32 per cent and the reason for this case was due to pension issues at home by their own children and formed to be 14.32 per cent and also improper medication by not giving the medicines or various treatments at the right time was found to be about 5.27 per cent.

Statistics revealed that the cases against elderly abuse constitute only a small proportion of total cases reported. Survey of the study shows that cases of elderly abuse is highest in urban areas followed by small towns in metropolitan cities due to various reasons like dual earning where they found no time in looking after their needs when compared to rural areas of Andhra Pradesh. Interestingly from the results of the study it is evident that males are being subjected to abuse which shows 77.38 per cent and females found to be 28.61 per cent of elderly abuse.

Table 1 : Number of elder abuse cases reported during 2018-19

Sr. No.	Name of the district	Number of cases reported
1.	Srikkakulam	06
2.	Kurnool	10
3.	West Godavari	14
4.	Kadapa	20
5.	Guntur	18
6.	Vishakhapatnam	12
	Total	80

Majority of the elder abuse cases were reported in kadapa district of Andhra Pradesh (20) followed by Guntur (18), West godavari (14), Vishakhapatnam (12),

Table 2 : Age, gender and marital status of elder abuse cases reported during 2018-19 (n=80)

Variables	Category	Frequency (n=80)	Percentage
Age	Young old (65-74)	36	45.23
	Middle old (75-84)	29	36.26
	Old old (Above 85)	15	18.51
Gender	Male	62	77.38
	Female	18	22.61
Marital status	Married	49	61.77
	Unmarried	0	0
	Spouse death	31	38.23

Kurnool (10) and least cases were reported in Srikakulam district.

It is clear from the data that majority of the elderly who were victims of abuse are in the age group 65-74 years and the lowest cases in the age group of above 85 years. Most of the victims were males and they are all married in which its is reported that 38.23 death is of their spouse.

Table 3 : Persons involved in elder abuse (n=80)		
Type of culprit	Frequency	Percentage
Care givers	23	28.75%
Son/ daughter	45	56.25%
Son in law/ daughter in law	12	15%

According to the report most of the elders were abused by their son/ daughter and the percentage is 56.25 per cent, followed by their caregivers is 28.75 per cent and then by their Son in law/ daughter in law is 15 per cent. Interestingly in the cases reported during the period spouse and grand children are not involved. Majority of

Table 4 : Reasons for elder abuse (n=80)		
Reasons	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Neglect (Food, clothing, comfort)	19	24.16%
Criticizing	14	18.01%
Blaming	31	38.25%
Pension issues	12	14.32%
Neglect (Medicines, treatment)	4	5.27%

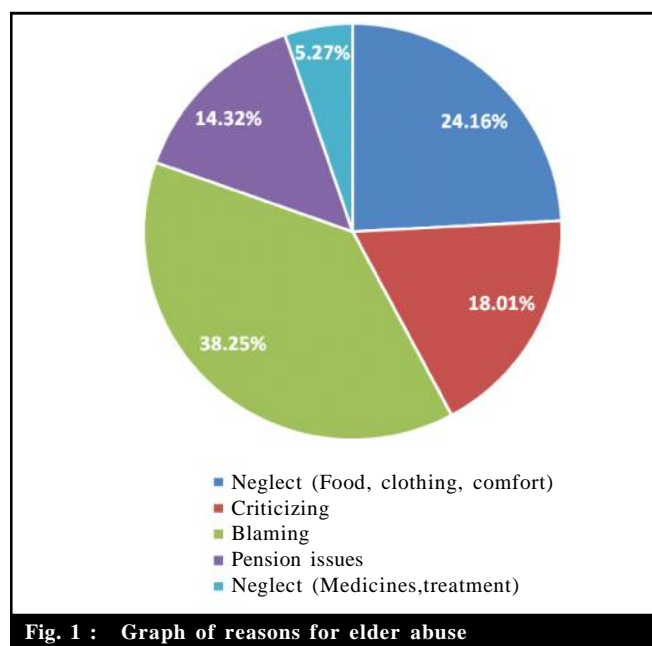


Fig. 1 : Graph of reasons for elder abuse

the cases Son is involved as the prime responsibility of taking care of parents is shouldered by them.

The data indicated that major reason for abusing old was blaming them for not attending to the works assigned or tasks given (38.25 %). Old people are expected to help in the household chores and other outside activities like taking care of their grand children, payment of bills, getting vegetables and groceries etc. If these activities are not done they are put to blame by their sons and daughter in laws. The old people are denied of giving proper clothing, food and comfort by their family members (24.16%). The reason is they stay at home and dependent on their son / daughter for their basic needs. If the elderly are non-pensioners the situation is even worse. Many deaths are occurring due to neglect of elderly. Pension related issues are also one reason for elder abuse. Those who get pensions are somewhat better treated than non pensioners irrespective of gender. The old people are often criticized for their activities, clothing and food issues by their family members. Their decisions are not valued and respected. Many times the medicines and medical treatments are also denied giving the least priority.

Majority of the victims experienced psychological and emotional abuse is 56.25 per cent, followed by

Table 5 : Types of elder abuse		
Type of case	Frequency (n= 80)	Percentage
Physical abuse	19	24.16%
Psychological and emotional abuse	45	56.25%
Ill treatment	12	14.32%
Improper medication	4	5.27%

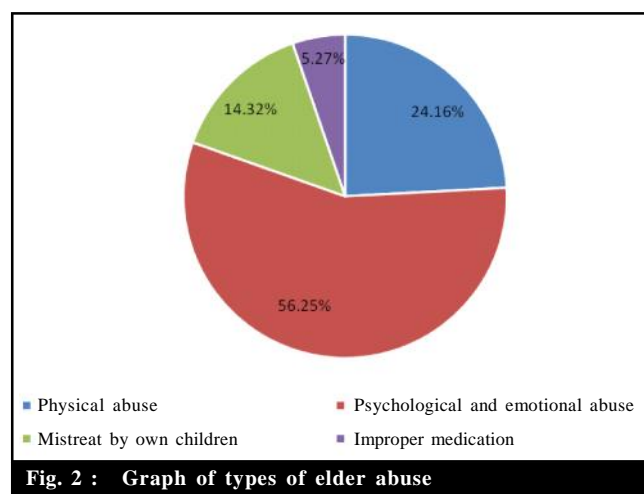


Fig. 2 : Graph of types of elder abuse

physical abuse 24.16 per cent. Interestingly it was reported that 14.32 per cent of the cases were ill treated by their own children and 5.27 per cent cases reported were denied of medicines and medical treatment. Financial abuse cases were not reported during this period. However pension related and property related issues were reported in few cases which were coupled with the psychological and emotional abuse. Using abusive language, neglecting, isolation, not involving in decision making and family related matters, not showing love and affection, respect were few ways of psychological and emotional abuse experienced by the elderly. Physical abuse was mostly seen in middle old and old – old category of elderly compared to young old. Similar work related to the present investigation was also conducted by Achappa *et al.* (2016); Jamuna (2003); Latha (2018); Naughton *et al.* (2013) and Skirbekk and James (2014) and the result found were more or less similar to the present investigation.

Conclusion:

The content analysis of the articles on elder abuse reported during 2018-2019 revealed that majority of the elderly are experiencing psychological and emotional abuse followed by physical abuse. Young old category of elderly are mostly the victims of psychological abuse where as middle old and old-old category are becoming victims of physical and ill treatment types of abuse. Elderly as long as they are engaged in productive work and financially independent, possessing assets and property are less abused. Among male and female elderly, men are experiencing more abuse than women. It is sad to know that number of elderly abuse cases are increasing day by day in India. The suicidal rate and abandonment of elderly is also on the rise. Therefore there is a need to provide social and psychological support

systems in the community in order to address the needs of elderly. We need to imbibe the values to respect elderly needs and be a support for them without feeling them as a burden. There is a need to strengthen family system also to promote a happy and healthy aging.

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