



The Rich Tapestry of Indian Cultural Diversity: Exploring the New Responsibilities of Adult Children towards Elderly Parents

Amar Vijay Jamnekar *

Assistant Professor, Department of Management, G H Rasoni University, Amravati, Maharashtra
Email id: amarjamnekar55@gmail.com

Sheetal Ajay Warankar

Assistant Professor, School of Law, G H Rasoni University, Amravati, Maharashtra,
Email: sheetal_warankar@rediffmail.com

Md Tanweer Alam Sunny

Assistant Professor, School of Law, Sandip University, Nashik, Maharashtra, India
Email id: -cstanweeralam@gmail.com

Bhavana S Sahu

Assistant Professor, Department of Management, G H Rasoni University, Amravati, Maharashtra
Email id: -sahubhav2530@gmail.com

ARTICLE DETAILS

Research Paper

Keywords :

Elderly parents, Indian Culture, Diversity, Parents Care, Solicitude, Gratitude

ABSTRACT

Technology advances and commercialization proliferate, and elderly individuals may struggle to adapt due to physical disabilities and changes in mental faculties. Adult children must fulfill their duty of caring for their elderly parents, which requires lifelong preparation. Incorporating values of care, solicitude, and gratitude in education can be beneficial in this regard. Professor Tadeusz Kotarbiński has explored the concept of a "trustworthy protector" to deepen the idea of caregiving. The ethics of solicitude and gratitude is gaining recognition among contemporary thinkers. When adult children take on the responsibility of caring for their elderly parents during middle adulthood, these ideas can be fully expressed and put into practice. Societal norms, demographics, and healthcare advancements have led to evolving responsibilities for adult children toward their elderly parents. This research examines these shifting dynamics, presenting

diverse perspectives and relevant statistics to provide a comprehensive understanding of this changing landscape. The responsibilities of adult children towards senior citizens hold great importance in fostering a society that values intergenerational care and compassion. As our population ages, it becomes crucial to address the evolving dynamics of caregiving for older adults. This research explores the multifaceted responsibilities of adult children towards senior citizens, considering diverse perspectives and incorporating relevant statistics to provide a comprehensive understanding of this topic.

Introduction

India, known for its cultural diversity, is a nation that embraces a myriad of traditions, languages, religions, and customs. This diversity is not only reflected in festivals, clothing, and languages but also in the concept of intergenerational care and the responsibilities that adult children have towards their senior citizens. In Indian culture, the responsibilities of adult children towards senior citizens are deeply ingrained, reflecting the values of respect, filial piety, and inter-generational care. Elderly people are indeed a treasure of wisdom and real-life experience. They have endured and overcome various challenges and hardships throughout their lives. Their experiences provide valuable insights and lessons that we can learn from. It is crucial to take care of them and show our respect and appreciation. Elderly individuals possess a wealth of knowledge and experience that they can share with the younger generation. They can teach us about important aspects of life, such as navigating relationships, building a successful career, and being a good human being. By listening to their stories and experiences, we can learn and grow as individuals.

In India, the traditional expectation of adult children's responsibilities towards their senior citizens is deeply ingrained in the cultural values of filial piety. This expectation is further reinforced by the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act of 2007, which places a statutory duty on adult children to provide support for their parents who are unable to provide for themselves. The cultural importance of filial piety and the legal obligations outlined in the act reflect the societal emphasis on caregiving for the elderly within the family unit. However, the changing social landscape in India, characterized by migration, changes in family structure, and increased female participation in the labor force, has posed challenges to the traditional roles of adult children in providing support for their

parents. In light of these complexities, it is essential to examine how the cultural values of filial piety and the legal obligations intersect with the societal changes to ensure the well-being and quality of life of older persons. Understanding the dynamics of these responsibilities within the evolving social context is crucial in ensuring adequate care and support for senior citizens in India. Given the cultural and legal expectations placed on adult children to care for their elderly parents, it is crucial to recognize the evolving social dynamics that impact these traditional responsibilities. The traditional concept of filial piety has deep roots in Indian society, emphasizing the importance of caregiving for senior citizens within the family. This cultural expectation has been further reinforced by the legislative framework, recognizing the duty of adult children to support their aging parents.

However, as India undergoes social transformations, such as changes in family structure and increased female workforce participation, the traditional roles of adult children in providing care for their parents face new challenges. Migration patterns also contribute to the complexities surrounding elderly care, as adult children may find themselves geographically separated from their aging parents.

In navigating these complexities, it is essential to explore how cultural values, legal obligations, and evolving societal dynamics intersect. This exploration can provide insights into developing support systems that adapt to the changing landscape while upholding the fundamental principles of filial piety and ensuring the well-being of senior citizens. Balancing tradition and modernity in the context of elderly care is crucial for addressing the diverse needs of older persons in India. Taking into consideration the evolving dynamics of society in India, it is evident that the traditional concept of filial piety and the legal obligations placed on adult children about elderly care are being influenced by changing social structures and trends. As families transform due to factors like migration, changes in family roles, and increased participation of women in the labor force, the traditional model of elderly care within the family is encountering challenges.

Amidst these evolving dynamics, it becomes increasingly important to address the needs of senior citizens in a manner that is sensitive to both cultural traditions and the changing societal landscape. While the concept of filial piety remains deeply ingrained in Indian society, new approaches and support systems need to be developed to account for the complexities brought about by social change. As the problem of aging and the elderly becomes more pronounced in today's society, it is essential for both developed and developing nations to implement social, legislative, reformative, and welfare measures to protect the interests of older people. This includes ensuring their access to healthcare, social support, and opportunities for engagement and participation in society. It is not only our responsibility to provide for the needs of the elderly but also to cherish their presence in our lives. By spending time with them,

listening to their stories, and offering our support, we demonstrate our respect and gratitude. By instilling values of respect for elders in younger generations, we can create a culture of reverence and ensure that future generations continue to appreciate and value the wisdom and experiences of the elderly.

Objective

1. The objective of this research is to examine the shifting roles and responsibilities of adult children towards their elderly parents.
2. This research aims to explore the changing dynamics in intergenerational relationships, particularly in the context of caregiving, financial support, and decision-making for elderly parents.
3. The research seeks to understand the implications of these evolving responsibilities on both adult children and their aging parents, as well as the broader societal impact.
4. Government schemes for elderly individuals are crucial in promoting their well-being, addressing their unique needs, and ensuring a dignified life during their older years.

Through this exploration, the goal is to gain insights into the challenges, opportunities, and potential best practices for supporting elderly parents in contemporary society. As part of the research, a thorough review of existing literature on intergenerational relationships and caregiving dynamics will be conducted. The study will also analyze the impact of cultural and societal changes on the traditional roles of adult children in caring for their aging parents. By delving into these areas, the research aims to provide valuable insights for families, policymakers, and healthcare professionals in addressing the complex needs of elderly individuals and their adult children.

Research Methodology

In this research, descriptive analysis is employed as an exploratory empirical research method for data collection and analysis. Secondary data was gathered from a range of sources, including government reports, books, journals, magazines, newspapers, conference proceedings, and websites.

Review of Literature

Anderson, R. J. (2005) This study investigated the presence of triangulation between elderly individuals and their adult children, and its impact on various outcomes including problem-solving, communication, time spent together, intimacy, depression, and marital satisfaction. The findings revealed a strong

correlation between triangulation and negative consequences for elderly parents across all dependent variables.

Ansari, H. (2021). In India, the condition of the elderly is assessed through contrasting perspectives. One acknowledges the difficulties posed by social and demographic changes, while the other recognizes the positive impact of social change on their status. This analysis delves into research on family-based elderly care, the influence of social change on Indian society, health conditions, treatment-seeking behavior, government welfare services, challenges encountered, and potential solutions, drawing on secondary data sources.

Gupta, R. (2009). This study presents a systems model of caregiver burden among Indian caregivers, focusing on the effects of elder characteristics, family structure, and caregiver characteristics. A sample of 259 caregivers was surveyed using a multistage probability method. Regression analysis revealed that personal characteristics, elder characteristics (such as behavioral problems), and family-level factors significantly influenced caregiver burden. The study contributes to understanding caregiver burden and discusses implications for social work practice.

Mudey, A., Ambekar, S., Goyal, R. C., Agarekar, S., & Wagh, V. V. (2011). The study aimed to compare the quality of life (QOL) between rural and urban elderly populations in India and explore the association between socio-demographic profiles and QOL. Based on interviews with 800 elderly individuals, the study found that urban elders reported significantly lower QOL in physical and psychological domains, while rural elders reported lower QOL in social relations and environmental domains. Differences were attributed to socio-demographic factors, social resources, lifestyle behaviors, and income adequacy.

Theixos, H. (2013) This study delves into the social and moral implications when adult children become caregivers for their elderly or sick parents. It explores the complexities involved in meeting societal expectations and the moral criticism faced by those who do not conform. The study also explores these dynamics about disability.

Understanding Indian Cultural Diversity

India is a land of immense cultural richness. From the snow-capped mountains of the Himalayas to the coastal regions of the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea, every part of India has its distinct customs and traditions. According to the last Census of India (2011), the country is home to more than 2,000 distinct ethnic groups, over 1,600 indigenous languages, and six major religions: Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, and Jainism. This diversity is not just limited to regional and religious differences

but also extends to the concept of filial piety and the responsibilities of adult children towards their parents and senior citizens.

The Significance of Filial Piety in Indian Culture

Filial piety, or "**Matru Devo Bhava, Pitru Devo Bhava**" (Mother is Divine, Father is Divine), is a fundamental tenet of Indian culture. It emphasizes the reverence, love, and care that adult children are expected to show towards their aging parents. This cultural value serves as a foundation for the responsibilities adult children hold towards senior citizens in Indian society.

Responsibilities of Adult Children towards Senior Citizens

In Indian culture, adult children are generally expected to take care of their elderly parents. This responsibility is deeply ingrained in the societal fabric and is seen as a moral duty. However, it is essential to understand that cultural norms may vary among different ethnic groups and regions within India.

- 1. Financial Support:** One of the primary responsibilities of adult children towards senior citizens is ensuring their financial well-being. It involves providing for their basic needs, and medical expenses, and ensuring their financial security, especially during their retirement years.
- 2. Physical and Emotional Support:** The responsibilities of adult children towards senior citizens in Indian culture encompass providing physical and emotional support. This includes assisting with daily activities, healthcare management, and ensuring their overall well-being. One of the essential responsibilities of adult children towards senior citizens is to provide physical and emotional support. This can include assisting with daily activities, such as meal preparation, medication management, and transportation, as well as being emotionally present to alleviate feelings of isolation and loneliness.
- 3. Respecting Autonomy:** When supporting senior citizens, it's crucial to acknowledge their autonomy and individuality. Respecting their personal choices, privacy, and independence helps them maintain their dignity and sense of self-worth.
- 4. Treat them with dignity and respect:** Treating our parents with respect and dignity is a reflection of gratitude for their sacrifices. Similarly, there is a need to treat elderly individuals with kindness and equality. By fostering a culture of respect and awareness of ageism, we can improve interactions and relationships with both parents and elders



5. **Listen to them:** Parents play a crucial role in listening to and supporting their children throughout their lives. They invest a significant amount of time and effort in fostering communication and understanding. It's important to recognize and appreciate the patience and genuine interest they have shown in listening to our stories, answering our questions, and supporting us through our ups and downs.
6. **Make time for them:** Amid our busy lives, it's important to stay in touch with our parents, even if it's not as often as we'd like. Regular phone calls, video chats, or occasional visits can strengthen the bond between parent and child. Parents understand our responsibilities and appreciate any effort we make to connect, easing any guilt for not always being physically present.
7. **Advocate for them:** Advocating for our elderly loved ones is crucial to ensure they receive proper care and respect. We must speak up against neglect or mistreatment and support policies that benefit the elderly. Researching organizations and resources can provide valuable support, and as an assistant, I am here to help in any way to support and advocate for your loved one. Teach them that age should not be a barrier to learning new skills. Instead of making jokes about older individuals and technology, it is better to teach and support them. By taking the opportunity to teach grandparents how to use technology like Skype, and by listening patiently to their stories, we can make them feel valued and heard in return.
8. **Balancing Modern Challenges:** Balancing career aspirations, geographical distances, and economic pressures with the responsibilities of caring for aging parents can be challenging for adult children. The Sociological Bulletin emphasizes the need for open communication, family collaboration, and support networks to effectively navigate these modern hurdles and ensure the care and support of senior citizens.

Life learning Lesson from Generation

Spending time with our parents as they get older is not only a duty but also an opportunity for us to cherish the special bond we share with them. Here are a few reasons why it is a win-win-win situation:

1. **Emotional Connection:** By spending time together, you get to strengthen the emotional connection with your parents. You can create new memories, share laughs, and deepen your understanding of each other. This can bring immense joy and fulfillment to both parties.
2. **Wisdom and Life Lessons:** As our parents grow older, they have a wealth of wisdom and life experiences to share. By spending time with them, you have the opportunity to learn from their experiences, gain valuable insights, and receive guidance in different aspects of life.

3. **Preserving Family Traditions:** Family recipes, stories, and traditions are an important part of our heritage. Spending time with our parents allows us to learn and preserve these traditions, ensuring that they are passed down to future generations. It strengthens our sense of identity and connection to our roots.
4. **Support and Companionship:** As our parents age, they may need additional support and companionship. By being there for them, we can provide emotional, physical, and practical assistance. This can bring peace of mind to both parties and create a supportive and loving environment. Remember, spending time with our parents as they age is not just a duty, but an opportunity to build and nurture a meaningful and lasting relationship.

Elderly People are the treasure of wisdom and real-life experience. They are the people who have gone through the harsh realities of life. They are the people who have seen and done a lot. They are the people who can teach us a great deal about life. It is important to take care of them and learn from them. The elderly people have a lot of experience and knowledge that they can share with the younger generation. Elderly people can teach us about different aspects of life, such as how to handle relationships, how to be successful in a career, and how to be a good human being. Therefore we must take care of elderly people, we should learn from their experience and knowledge. It is important to listen to their stories and be there for them. We should cherish their presence in our lives. We should also respect our elders. A father who has taught his son to respect his grandfather can be sure that he will earn the respect of his grandchildren in the future.

Respecting Diverse Perspectives

While Indian culture places significant emphasis on the responsibilities of adult children towards senior citizens, it is essential to consider the diversity of family structures and circumstances. Some families may retain traditional joint family systems, where several generations live together, sharing caregiving duties. However, evolving societal dynamics have led to more nuclear families or geographical separation, demanding alternative care arrangements and innovative approaches to fulfill these responsibilities effectively. Responsibilities towards senior citizens can be influenced by cultural values and diverse perspectives. Different cultural backgrounds may emphasize filial piety, obligating adult children to prioritize the welfare of their aging parents. However, it is crucial to recognize that each family has unique dynamics and circumstances. Understanding and respecting cultural diversity is vital in effectively addressing the responsibilities of adult children towards senior citizens.

Statistics on Senior Citizens in India

In India, people 60 years of age and older will account for one-fifth of the country's population by 2050, predicts the 'India Ageing Report 2023' published by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in partnership with the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS). There are currently 149 million people in the country who are 60 years of age or older, making up about 10.5% of the total population. According to the report, this population will double to 20.8% by 2050, totaling 347 million, which means that one in five people will be elderly. In addition, the report predicts that the elderly will make up more than 36% of the nation's population by the end of the century.

As per the UNFPA's India Ageing Report 2023, more than 40% of the elderly population is situated in the lowest quintile of wealth. The elderly who live in poverty may not have as good of a quality of life or as easy access to healthcare. Moreover, 18.7% of senior citizens have no income, according to a study of their employment, pension, and financial situation. In seventeen states—ranging from 19.3% in Uttarakhand to 42.4% in Lakshadweep—this percentage is higher than the national average.

Elderly Parents Problem

The transformation of Indian society, fueled by industrialization, urbanization, technology, education, and globalization, is reshaping traditional values and institutions. This shift has weakened intergenerational bonds in families as industrialization replaces small-scale family production with mass production and factory systems. The neglect of elderly parents, coupled with retirement disillusionment, contributes to powerlessness, loneliness, and isolation. Financial struggles arise from retirement and dependence on children, as well as unexpected healthcare costs. Migration from rural areas worsens poverty and distress for older individuals, who also lack appropriate housing options.

Government Policies

The Government of India has implemented various policies and programs to cater to the needs of the elderly population. Initiatives such as the NSAP, NPHCE, Maintenance and Welfare of Senior Citizens Act, and AVYAY have been introduced. To prioritize the welfare of seniors, intergenerational relationships, specialized healthcare, and access to social services through technology are crucial. Strengthening data systems is needed to tailor services to the unique requirements of aging populations. India must take immediate action to protect the dignity and well-being of its aging population..

The Government of India has implemented various policies and programs to address the needs of the elderly population, including healthcare initiatives, social assistance programs, and legislative efforts. The objectives are to provide specialized healthcare, promote intergenerational bonds, and utilize technology to make services more accessible. Prioritizing the needs of seniors in disaster preparedness and strengthening data systems are crucial for customization and understanding the impact of aging. India should prioritize the well-being of its elderly citizens and take immediate action to protect their dignity and sense of purpose.

India's Social Assistance Scheme

National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP), important non-contributory pension schemes exist for the elderly, widowed women, and disabled individuals in India. The Ministry of Rural Development supervises these schemes. However, issues with the NSAP scheme persist, such as the limitation of eligibility to below-poverty line (BPL) families based on often outdated BPL lists, leading to exclusion errors. Targeting is not a suitable method for old-age pensions since widowhood or old age could cause significant deprivation within a comparatively prosperous household.

Complicated formalities and stagnant contributions are hindering the effectiveness of India's National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) for pensions. Elderly individuals face difficulties in navigating complex eligibility requirements, and the central contribution remains insufficient. On the other hand, some states have supplemented NSAP with their schemes to increase coverage.

Government Scheme

- 1. The Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (PMVVY)** is a Pension Scheme designed for senior citizens aged 60 and above in India. The scheme has been extended until 2023 to provide further benefits. The Integrated Program for Older Persons (IPOP) aims to improve the quality of life for seniors by offering basic amenities like food, shelter, healthcare, and entertainment.
- 2. The Rashtriya Vayoshree Yojana** provides aids and assistive devices to low-income senior citizens with age-related disabilities. It is funded by the Senior Citizens' Welfare Fund, established in 2016. The SAMPANN Project, launched in 2018, facilitates online pension processing for Department of Telecommunications pensioners with direct bank account payments.
- 3. The SACRED Portal** for the Elderly, developed by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, allows citizens over 60 to register and find job opportunities. Additionally, the Elder Line Toll-Free Number provides immediate assistance and emotional support for pension, medical,

and legal matters, offering a national platform for senior citizens to seek guidance and connect with others.

- 4. The SAGE (Seniorcare Ageing Growth Engine) Initiative** is a platform that offers a comprehensive range of elderly care products and services through credible start-ups. It aims to support individuals interested in entrepreneurship in the field of providing services for the elderly.

Ensuring protection from destitution is crucial for the elderly to lead dignified lives free from deprivation. Old-age pensions, in the form of cash, play a vital role in addressing health concerns and mitigating feelings of loneliness. They are integral to social security systems globally.

Emulating the successful models implemented by southern states and economically disadvantaged states like Odisha and Rajasthan can help achieve nearly universal social security pensions. To ensure nationwide implementation, reforming the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) by the central government is important. Prioritizing pension system reforms and providing comprehensive support and amenities for the elderly are also crucial aspects to consider.

Conclusion

India's cultural diversity offers a beautiful tapestry of traditions and values, including the concept of intergenerational care and the responsibilities of adult children towards senior citizens. Embracing this diversity entails understanding and respecting the unique cultural perspectives on senior care across the nation. Indian culture values the bond between generations and stresses the responsibilities of adult children towards senior citizens. While traditional values of filial piety continue to guide these responsibilities, there is recognition of the evolving dynamics of modern Indian families. It is essential to strike a harmonious blend of tradition and contemporary care, respecting diverse perspectives and individual circumstances. By doing so, adult children can successfully fulfill their responsibilities towards senior citizens, nurturing a society that cherishes and supports the well-being of its elderly population.

The changing dynamics of caregiving for elderly parents require a multi-faceted approach that encompasses societal, familial, economic, and personal considerations. Adult children bear the responsibility of understanding this shifting landscape and adapting to meet the needs of their elderly parents. Collaboration among governmental, non-profit, and private sectors is vital in providing support structures and resources to enable adult children to fulfill these evolving responsibilities effectively. the

intersection of traditional values, legal obligations, and evolving societal dynamics requires a comprehensive and nuanced approach to eldercare. Recognizing the importance of cultural expectations and legal obligations while adapting to the changing needs of families and senior citizens will be essential in ensuring the well-being and quality of life of older persons in India.

Assuming the responsibility of caring for senior citizens involves not only financial and healthcare support but also emotional well-being and respect for their autonomy. It is crucial to acknowledge that cultural expectations may vary from region to region and within different ethnic communities. The responsibilities of adult children towards senior citizens encompass a wide range of roles, from providing physical and emotional support to managing finances, advocating for healthcare needs, and respecting diverse perspectives. As our society continues to age, it is crucial to promote awareness and support systems that help adult children fulfill these responsibilities effectively. By nurturing the bonds of care and support between generations, we can create a society that cherishes and values the well-being of senior citizens. By honoring our cultural heritage and fulfilling our responsibilities, we pave the way for a harmonious bond between generations, fostering a society that respects and cherishes its elderly citizens.

Reference

1. Anderson, R. J. (2005). Triangulation between Elderly Parents And Adult Children.
2. Gupta, R. (2009). Systems perspective: understanding care giving of the elderly in India. *Health care for women international*, 30(12), 1040-1054.
3. Ansari, H. (2021). Care of elderly in India: issues and challenges. *Int J Creat Res Thoughts*, 9, e193-e203.
4. Mudey, A., Ambekar, S., Goyal, R. C., Agarekar, S., & Wagh, V. V. (2011). Assessment of quality of life among rural and urban elderly population of Wardha District, Maharashtra, India. *Studies on Ethno-medicine*, 5(2), 89-93.
5. Theixos, H. (2013). Adult children and eldercare: The moral considerations of filial obligations. *Michigan Family Review*, 17(1).
6. Qureshi, H., & Walker, A. (1989). *The caring relationship: Elderly people and their families*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
7. Wiles, J. L., Leibing, A., Guberman, N., Reeve, J., & Allen, R. E. (2012). The meaning of “aging in place” to older people. *The gerontologist*, 52(3), 357-366.



8. Dey, S., Nambiar, D., Lakshmi, J. K., Sheikh, K., & Reddy, K. S. (2012). Health of the elderly in India: challenges of access and affordability. In *Aging in Asia: Findings from new and emerging data initiatives*. National Academies Press (US).
9. Raj, D., Swain, P. K., & Pedgaonkar, S. P. (2014). A study on quality of life satisfaction & physical health of elderly people in Varanasi: An urban area of Uttar Pradesh, India. *Int J Med Sci Publ Health*, 3(5), 616-20.
10. Banerjee, S. (2021). Determinants of rural-urban differential in healthcare utilization among the elderly population in India. *BMC Public Health*, 21(1), 1-18.
11. <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1847436>
12. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/india-aging-rapidly-60-will-make-up-15-of-population-by-2036-un/articleshow/104001546.cms>
13. <https://www.cnbc.com/2023/10/02/indias-elderly-population-will-double-and-overtake-children-by-2050.html>
14. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/ht-insight/knowledge/indias-ageing-population-why-it-matters-more-than-ever-101703315900846.html>