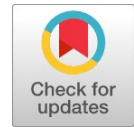


# Crime and Violence: Unfavorable on Living Conditions of Senior Citizens

Radhika Kapur



**Abstract:** *The senior citizens, belonging to all communities, categories and socio-economic backgrounds have been subjected to various forms of criminal and violent acts. These have unfavorable effects on the health and well-being of individuals, both physically as well as psychologically. The doers of these acts have been family as well as community members. The senior citizens need to be well-versed in terms of ways that are necessary in preventing these acts. They need to form cordial and amiable terms and relationships with family and community members. Furthermore, they are required to keep the doors and windows locked, particularly when they are alone within homes. The individuals in old age are required to be well-versed in terms of different types of methodologies and procedures, which would be facilitating in curbing these acts. The senior citizens need to obtain medical check-ups on regular basis. They are required to make visits to medical and health care centres in order to promote good health, physically and psychologically. In addition, they are required to put into operation different techniques in manner, which would contribute efficiently in bringing about improvements in one's overall quality of lives. Therefore, it is well-understood, crime and violence is unfavorable on living conditions of senior citizens. The main concepts that are taken into account in this research paper are, understanding crime and violence among senior citizens, criminal and violent acts are unfavorable to health and well-being of senior citizens, types of criminal and violent acts and laws relating to abuse of senior citizens in India.*

**Keywords:** *Capabilities, Crime and Violence, Health Problems, Illnesses, Senior Citizens, Unfavorable, Well-being*

## I. INTRODUCTION

In all communities, throughout the country, senior citizens are more vulnerable to crime and violence. The experiencing of different types of health problems and illnesses and decline in capabilities compel senior citizens to be subjected to various types of criminal and violent acts. The prevalence of crime is more among senior citizens, belonging to deprived, marginalized and socio-economically backward sections of the society. Since, individuals are overwhelmed by illiteracy and unawareness, as a consequence, they mistreat and abuse their elderly parents. The main reason that senior citizens are more vulnerable to crime and violence are, they are weak and cannot defend themselves. In the year 2015, total of 20, 532 cases of crime were registered against senior citizens. The data collected showed an increase of 9.7 percent than in the previous year of 2014.

Out of 20,532 crimes, maximum cases were registered under cheating that account for 1867. The cases of robbery were 1294, murder 1053 and grievous hurt were 949. These contribute 9.1 percent, 6.3 percent, 5.1 percent and 4.6 percent during 2015 respectively (Chapter - 20, n.d.).

There are various causes of prevalence of crime and violence against senior citizens. When they are unable to take care of their needs and requirements and depend upon others, they may feel frustrated and regard them as liabilities. When the senior citizens need something, i.e. learning how to make use of technologies and require assistance from others, they may get angry and frustrated, especially when they need to get engaged in own tasks (Chapter – 3, n.d.). When adult children are not engaged in jobs and do not earn, they are dependent upon their elderly parents. In such cases, they may even exploit them to financial resources and other valuables, whereas, in some cases, family members simply develop feelings of antagonism and hatred and mistreat and neglect the elderly members. In the present existence, there have been formulation of measures and programs that promote well-being and safety of senior citizens. When they feel, they are abused and mistreated by their adult children and other family members, they have the right to evict them or live separately from them.

## A. Understanding Crime and Violence among Senior Citizens

As the individuals get older, they experience various types of health problems and illnesses. Some of these are, pain in the joints, high blood pressure, low blood pressure, heart problems, kidney disorders, visual impairments, hearing impairments and so forth. As a consequence, they experience decline in abilities to carry out different types of job duties. Hence, they are dependent upon other family members or caregivers. These individuals have other job duties as well to pay attention towards rather than looking after the needs and requirements of elderly family members. In cases, the elderly individuals are demanding and call for them on continuous basis, they get infuriated. As a consequence, elderly individuals get subjected to verbal, physical and emotional abuse. The family members are normally the ones, who get engaged in these forms of abuse as compared to caregivers. The domestic helpers and service providers are paid for their services, hence, they do not tend to abuse and mistreat the elderly individuals. They feel listening to their demands and obeying these are regarded as a part of their job duties. Therefore, there is prevalence of criminal and violent acts among senior citizens by family members. The senior citizens in some cases are not ambulatory.

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## Crime and Violence: Unfavorable on Living Conditions of Senior Citizens

They need support and assistance from other individuals to carry out the activities of daily living of eating, bathing, dressing, toileting and transferring.

Furthermore, in cases of experiencing of visual and hearing impairments, they take time in understanding even simple concepts. They want the attention of others on regular basis. The elderly individuals in some cases develop cravings for certain food items and continually ask for those. The family members may abuse them out of the feelings of anger and frustration. The elderly individuals have been subjected to acts of theft and robbery as well. When professional robbers form the viewpoint that these individuals possess good amount of wealth, they make an attempt to enter the house in a friendly and decent manner. As a consequence, elderly individuals get subjected to the criminal and violent act of theft and robbery. Furthermore, they are required to experience physical and verbal abuse as well. The robbers usually tie them up, so they are not able to resist. Therefore, community members also get engaged in criminal and violent acts to rob senior citizens of their wealth.

In the present existence, in all communities, the elderly individuals form the viewpoint that it is necessary for them to accumulate financial resources. Hence, they aspire to get engaged in jobs. Within workplace as well, the elderly individuals have been subjected to different types of criminal and violent acts. Some of these are, verbal abuse, physical abuse, neglect and mistreatment and sexual harassment. The women employees are the ones, who experience sexual harassment by male employees, who are younger to them in age. The individuals, who are younger to them in age, get engaged in these acts. The main reason being, they look towards elderly individuals with the negative feelings of distrust and antipathy. It is apparently understood that in old age, the individuals may experience setbacks within the course of putting into operation different tasks and activities. When they are unable to meet the expectations of individuals in leadership positions, they are subjected to abuse and mistreatment. As a consequence, in some cases, they get compelled to leave their jobs, whereas, in other cases, they continue to work to support themselves financially. Therefore, senior citizens get subjected to criminal and violent acts within workplace.

### **B. Criminal and Violent Acts are Unfavorable to Health and Well-being of Senior Citizens**

The criminal and violent acts are experienced by elderly individuals from domestic helpers, caregivers, service providers and other community members. These individuals in some cases are warped minded and form the viewpoint that elderly individuals can be easily mistreated and robbed due to their vulnerable conditions. These individuals primarily have one aim behind getting engaged in different types of criminal and violent acts, i.e. to acquire wealth, money and other valuables. Research studies have highlighted that they usually appear to be friendly. When they acquire the confidence of the senior citizens, they harm them and rob them of valuables and finance resources. Physical abuse, theft, robbery and murder are the criminal and violent acts that senior citizens suffer at the hands of other individuals.

In order to avert these acts and promote safety, the senior citizens are advised by the family members, relatives, friends and other individuals to keep doors and windows

locked, particularly when they are living alone. In urban communities, the criminal acts of theft and robbery are more prevalent as compared to rural communities, hence, it is necessary to be well-equipped in terms of safety measures. Furthermore, valuables need to be kept safe in lockers. They should conduct an enquiry of individuals, before hiring them. When the helpers and service providers are new, they need to be observed and supervised, while they are performing their job duties. Hence, taking into consideration these aspects will promote safety among senior citizens and avert criminal and violent acts. Therefore, it is well-understood, criminal and violent acts are unfavorable to health and well-being of senior citizens.

It is generally agreed that the abuse of senior citizens is both an act of commission or omission, in which case, it is usually described as neglect and it may be either intentional or unintentional (Abhyankar, Abhyankar, & Yogesh, n.d.). In the present existence, individuals normally are occupied in their own lives. They are normally committed towards their jobs and career. When the individuals are engaged in full time jobs, they are unable to take out time to meet the needs and requirements of their elderly parents. In some cases, they need to travel, thus leaving them at the mercy of caregivers. This is referred to as emotional abuse. As a consequence, the health conditions of elderly individuals get affected, both physically as well as psychologically.

The elderly family members aspire to promote well-being of others. They want their children to do well in their job duties and enhance their career prospects. But when they feel, they are unable to take out time for them, they feel neglected. Neglect is also regarded as a form of abuse, which senior citizens experience to a major extent. As a consequence, they experience unfavorable effects on their health and well-being. It is disappointing, when family members do not take out time to communicate with their elderly parents or grand-parents. Hence, to prevent this form of abuse, the family members need to ensure they devote some time towards their elderly parents and get engaged into pleasant conversations with them. Therefore, it can be stated, criminal and violent acts are unfavorable to health and well-being of senior citizens.

Many regions have in recent years witnessed an improvement in the life expectancy of the individuals. One out of ten persons are above 60 years of age and are considered to be senior citizens. By the year 2050, it is estimated, one out of every five persons will be a senior citizen. Hence, one of the important aspects that needs to be taken into account is, within both urban and rural communities, there should be formulation of programs. These should have the primary goal of promoting well-being of senior citizens. In all communities, in all households, they need to be treated with respect and courtesy. As a consequence, individuals will promote a normal mind-set and there will be alleviation of different types of criminal and violent acts. With advancements taking place in technologies and advent of modernization and globalization, there have been advancements taking place in science and technologies.

These factors have rendered a significant contribution in making improvements in life expectancy. The senior citizens are generating awareness and becoming well-equipped in terms of different types of strategies and approaches that need to be implemented to maintain good health and well-being (Protection of Women, 2006). But due to the prevalence of crime and violence against them, they become vulnerable and experience psychological problems of stress, depression and trauma. For instance, experiencing physical abuse may not only affect them physically but also psychologically. Therefore, it is understood on a comprehensive basis that criminal and violent acts are unfavorable to health and well-being of senior citizens.

It is the responsibility of the family members to take care of the health and safety of the senior citizens. The individuals, who are overwhelmed by problems of illiteracy and unawareness need to acknowledge the negativities of criminal and violent acts and refrain from them. The elderly individuals obtain various kinds of ideas and suggestions from family members, which may enable them to promote safety and well-being. When the family members are living at a distance from their elderly parents, they ensure, they remain in contact with them regularly. When the elderly parents do not maintain good health and there are not any caregivers or helpers, they may take their parents with them. When senior citizens live with their adult children, they not only pay attention towards their jobs and careers, but also take care of the needs and requirements of their elderly parents.

The parents give good education to their children, so they are able to get engaged in good jobs and sustain their living conditions in an appropriate manner. When adult children are engaged in good employment opportunities and generate a good source of income, they do not have to be dependent upon their elderly parents. Hence, acquisition of good employment opportunities enables the individuals to be financially secure and financial exploitation of elderly parents is eliminated. Hence, it can be stated that maintenance of good terms and relationships with the elderly family members renders a significant contribution in promoting well-being and safety. Therefore, when elderly family members are financially exploited, it is stated that criminal and violent acts are unfavorable to health and well-being of senior citizens.

## II. TYPES OF CRIMINAL AND VIOLENT ACTS

Within and outside the homes, the senior citizens are subjected to various forms of criminal and violent acts. The doers are family as well as community members. These are experienced in a major or minor form. These have detrimental effects on the health conditions of elderly individuals, both physically as well as psychologically (Atal, Naik, & Das, 2013). As a consequence, the elderly individuals usually experience setbacks in implementation of different tasks and activities. Furthermore, they keep to themselves and do not take pleasure in communicating with others, including family and community members. In such cases, elderly individuals listen to religious sermons and religious hymns and read religious scriptures. They form the viewpoint that worshipping the Almighty will enable them to strengthen their tolerance power. As a consequence, they will be able to

live their lives peacefully. The various types of criminal and violent acts have been stated as follows:

### A. Verbal Abuse

Verbal abuse is the most common form of abuse. It takes place mainly through the use of obscene language and abusive words. The prevalence of feelings of anger and frustration leads to verbal abuse. The senior citizens normally experience this form of abuse at the hands of family members. When they possess the viewpoint that the elderly members of the family are becoming liabilities for them and imposing barriers within the course of implementation of other responsibilities and job duties, they may express their anger upon them. In some cases, the senior citizens may make demands of various things from their family members and caregivers. When they are unable to fulfill the demands, it may give rise to conflicting situations and thus verbal abuse. In some cases, the senior citizens may give their suggestions, which may not be acceptable by their family members, hence, it may result in conflicting situations and verbal abuse. Verbal abuse influences the mind-sets of the individuals. In order to prevent verbal abuse, it is essential to communicate in a polite and respectful manner with each other.

## III. PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse is the abuse that involves imposing physical harm upon anybody. It involves shaking, pushing, beating, or hitting with an object. Physical abuse may cause bodily pain or physical injury and even leads to psychological problems among individuals. The senior citizens may experience physical abuse from family members as well as outsiders. The family members impose physical abuse upon senior citizens, especially when they possess the viewpoint that they are not fulfilling their needs and requirements. Research has indicated that individuals physically abuse their elderly parents over minor issues, such as, when meals are not prepared, lack of water and so forth. The caregivers, service providers, and other outsiders physically abuse the senior citizens, particularly when they need to rob them of valuables. The injuries from physical abuse may be minor or major. In the case of minor injuries, they may apply ointments. On the other hand, in the case of major injuries, they may have to make visits to health care centres. It is essential for the individuals to realize that physical abuse is a crime and they need to prevent it.

### A. Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the most common form of abuse among senior citizens. It is often hidden and difficult to prove. It refers to the use of words, acts and other means, which may cause fear, vulnerability, apprehensiveness, humiliation, stress and anxiety. In other words, individuals experience psychological problems because of emotional abuse. When senior citizens are threatened by someone, they may feel emotional abuse. For instance, when they are living in a rented accommodation and are unable to pay rent on time, they may be given notice by the landlords.



Hence, notice of paying rent or eviction may cause stress and anxiety among them and it is regarded as the form of emotional abuse. The other aspects of emotional abuse includes, humiliation, ridiculing, infantilizing, cursing, harsh commands, physical or emotional isolation, ignoring, movement restrictions or bans. When they are prohibited from entering somewhere, when the family members may not allow them to enter the kitchen or their room, they feel emotionally abused. Therefore, it is important for the family members and other individuals to communicate in a polite and respectful manner with senior citizens and look after their well-being.

### B. Neglect

Neglect is referred to disregard, inattention, inadequate health care, abandonment, poor hygiene, malnutrition and dehydration. In old age, in some cases, the senior citizens are unable to take care of their needs and requirements and are dependent on others, including family members and caregivers. When these individuals are unable to take care of their needs and requirements, they feel neglected. Apart from obtaining material needs, it is vital for the senior citizens to get engaged into effective communication with their family members. When the family members are unable to take out time for them out of their busy schedules, they feel neglected. Neglect causes psychological problems among senior citizens. They feel neglected to a major extent, when they are unable to interact with others, particularly to share their joys and sorrows. Therefore, to prevent neglect of senior citizens, family members and caregivers need to get engaged in effective communication with them, they should go out to religious places, attend social and cultural activities, participate in accordance to their capabilities and aptitude and form good terms and relationships with other individuals.

## IV. FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION

The senior citizens, who are financially strong are normally exploited by their adult children as well as other individuals. Financial exploitation is making use of unlawful ways of exploiting the senior citizens of financial resources, valuables and property. When the adult children are not earning and are dependent upon their elderly parents for the sustenance of their living conditions, they exploit them financially. Financial exploitation involves forcing the senior citizens to sign the documents, evicting them from home, or asking them for money on regular basis for inappropriate acts, such as, smoking, alcohol, drugs, gambling and so forth. Research has indicated that adult children ask their elderly parents for money for inappropriate acts. When they refuse to give, they exploit them financially. In order to prevent financial exploitation, the senior citizens need to make their financial documents and valuables safe. They need to ensure, their adult children are not causing any major problems for them. When they have good terms and relationships with their children, they guide them to obtain some work, so they are able to meet their expenses. On the other hand, the adult children need to realize that they need to be independent and treat their parents with respect and courtesy. They should not exploit them or force them for wealth, financial resources or property.

### A. Grievous Hurt

Grievous hurt is the hurt that may cause severe injuries and in some cases may even prove fatal. Grievous hurt is caused by the individuals upon family members and senior citizens out of the feelings of anger. When they feel they are not agreeing with them, they cause grievous hurt. Research has indicated that in most cases, when the adult children feel that the ideas and suggestions given to them by their elderly parents are not in accordance to their aspirations and wishes, they may cause grievous hurt. It may cause severe physical injuries or may even prove to be fatal. When the senior citizens have suffered from grievous hurt at the hands of their own family members, they usually bring an end to the communication terms and refrain themselves from giving them any types of ideas and suggestions. Senior citizens aspire to promote well-being of their family members and community members. When their ideas and meaningful viewpoints and concerns are not accepted, when they are considered as liabilities and when individuals develop feelings of animosity against them, they may experience grievous hurt.

### B. Robbery

Robbery is a prevalent criminal act, primarily in urban areas. When individuals possess the viewpoint that senior citizens possess wealth and money, they may conduct robbery. The professional robbers are aware of methods that are used to conduct robbery. They make an entry into the house in a friendly manner. After making an entry, they communicate with the senior citizens and then hurt them to rob them of their money and other valuables. During 2015, a total of 1294 cases of robbery have been registered against senior citizens (Chapter - 20, n.d.). In order to prevent robbery, it is essential to implement certain approaches. The senior citizens need to keep the doors and windows locked, particularly when they are living alone. They need to ensure, they do not communicate with anybody not known to them. The senior citizens, belonging to deprived, marginalized and economically weaker sections of the society are normally unaware of methods and approaches. Hence, it is vital for them to generate awareness in terms of ways that are necessary to prevent robbery and promote safety.

### C. Cheating

Cheating is referred to making use of unlawful, unauthorized and false ways of exploiting senior citizens of financial resources. The criminal act of cheating is highlighted in a better way with the help of an example. Research has indicated that senior citizens are given phone calls that they have earned a lottery worth lakhs of rupees. In such cases, the senior citizens, who are financially not strong and are not well-educated may believe them easily. In most cases, they are asked to deposit a certain amount of money, i.e. 10,000 to 20,000 Rupees. When they deposit a certain amount of money, they do not obtain the lottery money. In this manner, they get cheated, when they are required to give money and do not obtain anything in return. Such cases cause psychological problems among senior citizens to a large extent.



When they underwent these kinds of detrimental experiences, they become alert in future. Hence, senior citizens, belonging to all categories and backgrounds need to understand that they should not pay attention to fake phone calls and do not let the individuals enter their homes, particularly the ones, not known to them.

**D. Murder**

Murder is the most severe criminal act that senior citizens become victims to. A total of 1053 cases of murder have been registered against senior citizens in 2015 (Chapter - 20, n.d.). Murdering of the individuals takes place out of the feelings of anger. When individuals develop the feelings of animosity and hatred against anybody, they may get engaged in this act. Research studies have indicated that murdering of senior citizens takes place out of number of causes. These include, verbal abuse, physical abuse, sexual harassment, unable to pay for the services acquired, or mistreatment. When individuals, particularly belonging to deprived, marginalized and economically weaker sections of the society experience these cases, they develop ill feelings and commit this act. In some cases, when they have experienced mistreatment or humiliation from individuals, they take revenge by hurting or murdering their elderly parents. Therefore, in order to prevent this act, it is vital for the individuals to maintain good terms and relationships with others, especially outside the home. The individuals need to communicate with their helpers, service providers and community members with respect and courtesy.

**E. Attempt to Commit Murder**

Attempt to commit murder is the criminal act, when the individuals are not able to take the lives of others, but their intention is to kill the person. In such cases, they make use of objects, which are used to inflict harm or injury upon the person and take his or her life. But they fail to kill the person, hence, it is termed as attempt to commit murder. A total of 456 cases of attempt to commit murder of senior citizens were registered during 2015 (Chapter - 20, n.d.). The major causes of attempt to commit murder are primarily the same as the other causes for committing other criminal acts, such as, feelings of animosity, hatred, antagonism, anger and so forth. The family members as well as the other individuals are involved in the criminal act of attempt to commit murder. Research has indicated that a senior citizen woman was burned by her own son and was hospitalized. She underwent medical treatment and ultimately survived. Hence, individuals even inflict this criminal act upon their elderly parents out of the feeling of resentment and when they do not listen to their demands.

**F. Laws Relating to Abuse of Senior Citizens in India**

After conducting research on senior citizens and particularly the criminal and violent acts, they are experiencing, it is necessary to formulate the laws relating to the abuse of senior citizens. The laws have been stated as follows: (Abhyankar, Abhyankar, & Yogessh, n.d.).

**V. INDIAN PENAL CODE, 1960**

Indian Penal Code, 1960 is the geriatric enactment, which penalizes almost all kinds of abuses and criminal and violent acts against individuals, irrespective of caste, creed, race, religion, age, gender, and socio-economic background.

**A. The Criminal Procedure Code, 1973**

The Criminal Procedure Code, 1973, Section 125 allows the maintenance of parents and wife, which covers the interim maintenance of the elderly parents and ensuring their economic security.

**B. The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007**

This act aims at protecting the elders and senior citizens under Clause 5(1) of the Act. A senior citizen or the parent may apply for maintenance under Clause 4 of the Act. A senior citizen is the citizen, who is above 60 years of age. A parent can be a father or mother, biological or adopted. If the senior citizen or parent is incapable, then the other individuals or voluntary organizations can apply for the maintenance on their behalf. The Tribunal may take cognizance suo moto, (it can act on its own cognizance). These two provisions are accepted, since most senior citizens or parents do not have the capacity to apply for maintenance.

**C. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005**

This act was enacted with the main purpose of protecting women from domestic violence. During the occurrence of domestic violence, the senior citizen women as well as the other women experience various forms of criminal and violent acts, such as, verbal abuse, physical abuse, sexual harassment, emotional abuse, financial exploitation and neglect. These acts affect them physically and psychologically. But physical abuse is the one that causes physical injuries and pain. Therefore, the main objective of this act is to protect women from domestic violence.

**VI. CONCLUSION**

Senior citizens, belonging to all communities are subjected to various types of criminal and violent acts. Criminal and violent acts are unfavorable to health and well-being of senior citizens. Types of criminal and violent acts are, verbal abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, financial exploitation, grievous hurt, robbery, cheating, murder, and attempt to commit murder. Laws relating to abuse of senior citizens in India are, Indian Penal Code, 1960, The Criminal Procedure Code, 1973, The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007 and The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005. Finally, it can be stated, in all communities, it is necessary to implement measures to curb various types of criminal and violent acts to promote well-being of senior citizens.

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