



## IMPACT OF SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTION IN THE CARE OF AGED

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**Abstract-** Indian society has been proud of its culture of caring for its aged parents and grandparents. However, the scenario has been changing drastically over the last one decade. The change is obviously due to the sweeping transformation occurring at the basic structure of the Indian society. These changes have brought diverse issues pertaining to the elderly care in our Indian society. Family was the primary institution providing all types of care to its elderly members, which has undergone structural changes as well. The present article provides why the elderly care is highly essential in contemporary era, and how and where can social work intervention play a vital role in the care of the aged. This article elucidates the concepts and definition of ageing as well. The article covered a total of 80 aged respondents from two villages, that is, Goila and Madwana. For this, 40 willing participants in the age group 60 and above were selected from each village. Each member had a distinct and unique characteristic.

**Keywords:** Social Intervention, Social Work, Old Age People etc.

### I. INTRODUCTION

Old people are found in all societies, but in very different proportions. The boundary of old age cannot be defined exactly because it does not have the same meaning in all societies. The United Nations uses 60 years to refer to older people. Demographers also use this line, which divides the younger and the older cohorts of a population. However, in many developed countries, the age of 65 is used as a reference point for older persons as this is often the age at which persons become eligible for old-age social security benefits. In India, old age consists of ages nearing or surpassing the average life span of human beings. Government of India adopted "National Policy on Older Persons" in January, 1999. The policy defines "senior citizen" or "elderly" or "old age" as a person who is of age 60 years or above. Therefore, there is no exact definition of "old" as this concept has different meanings in different societies.

Defining "old" is further challenged by the changing average lifespan of the human beings. There are other definitions of "old" that go beyond chronological age. Old age as a social construct is often associated with a change of social roles and activities, for example, becoming a grandparent or a pensioner. Older persons often define old age as a stage at which functional, mental and physical capacity declines and people are more prone to disease or disabilities (UNFPA Report, 2012). In this research, people who are of 60 years and above are considered as old.

### II. NATIONAL SCENARIO OF AGING

Downward changes in fertility and mortality impact the ageing of the population. The population is forced into ageing by low birth rates, along with long life expectancies. The number of 60 or older is seen to swell quickly and even the proportion of people over 80 years of age is rising. At the same time, the number of people aged 15-59 years and older declines and the average age is also rising even in the workforce. The ageing population of developing countries such as India will increase pressures at different socio-economic fronts, including pension expenditure, medical care expenditure, taxes and savings etc.

By 2026, North India is expected to be smaller than South India. In India, there will soon be another paradoxical problem. By 2026, Uttar Pradesh will have the highest educated workforce with a median age above 35 years while Uttar Pradesh has a working population that is uneducated and less educated with an average age of less than 30. While estimates show that India's population aged over 60 would double from 2001 to 2026, 12.17 percent of the total population is expected to increase in 2026, and India's vast country may have different rural and urban problems. Their number is projected to grow to double. India will face another challenge — it will be with a large, ageing population that is much poorer than its

counterparts in the West, despite fast and steady economic growth. In India, pensions and other retirement pensions differ between 60 and 65 years in most of those who worked in the organised sector. However, more needs to be done because, at age, medical costs rise and child or relative dependence is growing to sustain them physically, psychologically and economically. In India the percentage of wise greying, but not very fast, is a great challenge for the politicians because of its mammoth scale preparation for the elderly. The problems that females face are more important than that of males because of the low level of literacy, customary ownership of property by males and women, the majority of whom are not working in the organised sector during their highest age. The policy on older people can also also retain a rational gender dimension. It is important to note that sensitising the issue and deliberate public intervention will dilute certain negative effects of ageing. Educating the mass with high expenditure in the production of human capital will to a large degree address these problems. In order to establish necessary policies for the elderly, an elderly person must be examined in various respects and social, financial and health policy discussions regarding the ageing of Indian population must be initiated. However, data sets and analyses are severely inadequate to recognise emerging areas of significant concern and immediate intervention (Govt. of India, 2011).

### III. SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTION AND ITS IMPACT

In the previous chapter, the existing situations of the elderly in experimental (Madwana) and control (Goila) village have been discussed. On the basis of the existing situations of the elderly with regard to their physical, mental health, and support system, social work intervention was introduced in Madwana. Goila was reserved as a control village to compare the effect of intervention. An intervention package consisting of various social work intervention strategies and procedures was designed to improve the conditions of aged in the experimental village. Therefore, the present chapter intends to examine the social work intervention approach and procedure administered by the researcher in addressing the existing situation of the elderly.

#### 3.1 Context for Social Work Intervention

Situational analysis of the elderly during pre-intervention phase portrays the basis for social work intervention in *Madwana*. The baseline data showed that the respondents of *Madwana* have diverse socio-economic characteristics and less basic amenities. The research findings show that majority of the participants are illiterate with no occupation and therefore have no source of regular income. Most of the respondents fail to have access to drinking water and toilet facilities at their houses. Although the research unfolds that majority of the respondents are eligible to avail old age and widow pension but fails to have any access. The living condition and accommodation of the respondents are extremely diverse but of very poor quality. The foods for most of the elderly are arranged by their spouses, relatives, and by themselves. Most of the respondents like to spend their leisure time with spouses, family members, and relatives.

The physical health including eye sight, hearing capacity and physical movement of the elderly are not good as reported by the respondents. Some of the elderly are disabled and fall sick more than four times a year due to various chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, arthritis, and diabetes, etc. In short, the research found that physical health problems affected most of the elderly in their activities of daily living. Majority of the elderly suffered from mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, sleeplessness, loneliness, and death fear. As the elderly is getting old, their memory to remember and recognise is getting reduced as reported by the respondents. Study found that loss of their dear ones affects about half of the respondents. Most of the elderly were not able to express their emotions with their family members. Existing family, social, and government support are not good for the most of the respondents. The respondents faced various forms of abuse and neglect.

Therefore, on the basis of issues emerged from baseline situation of the elderly in *Madwana*, social work intervention was implemented by the researcher to improve the condition of the elderly.

#### 3.2 Implementation of Social Work Intervention

The respondents are caught up with multiple problems with regard to their basic necessities, living arrangements, physical health, mental health, support system, elder abuse, and neglect. Subsequently

comprehending these problems of the elderly, the researcher designed a set of strategic intervention goals to address these problems as shown in Table 1. The goals include improvement of the basic necessities of the elderly; to create better living conditions for them, to improve physical, mental health, and the support system, and to reduce elder abuse and neglect. The researcher had applied specific strategies, methods, values, and principles. The researcher played various roles while implementing social work intervention.

**Table 1: Social Work Intervention Strategies**

<b>Areas of Intervention</b>	<b>Intervention Goals</b>	<b>Intervention Strategies</b>
Basic Necessities	To improve the basic necessities of the elderly	Networking, Advocacy, Awareness and Sensitisation Programmes, Counselling, Focused Group Discussions, and Integrated Social Work Practice.
Physical and Mental Health	To improve physical and mental health of the elderly	Active Ageing, Networking, Advocacy, Awareness, Sensitisation, Recreational, and Motivational Programmes, Health Camps, Cognitive Therapy, Crisis Intervention Strategy, Counselling, Focused Group Discussions, Social Case Work, and Integrated Social Work Practice.
Support System, Elder Abuse and Neglect	To improve the support system of the elderly and reduce elder abuse and neglect	Awareness and Sensitisation Programmes, Counselling, Focused Group Discussions, and Integrated Social Work Practice.

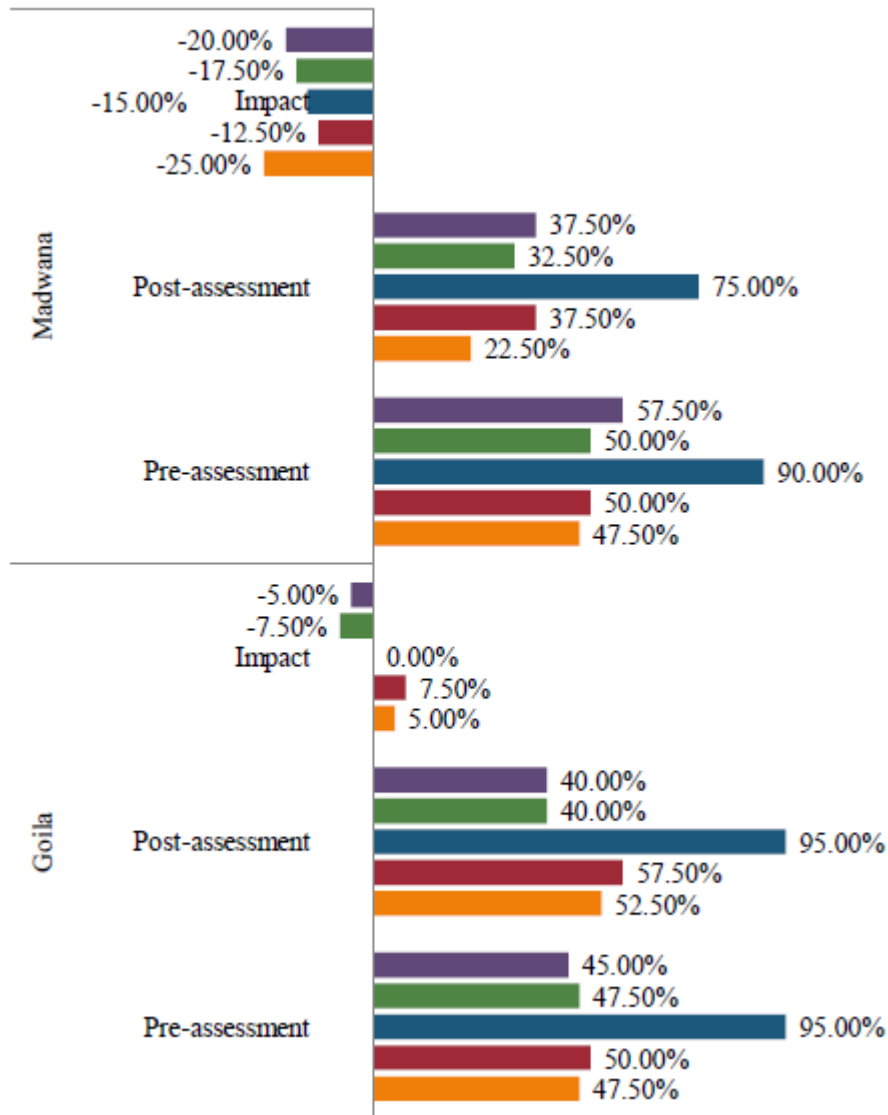
#### IV. IMPACT OF SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTION

This section of the present article examines the impact of social work intervention and the comparability of experimental and control groups. The current study covered a total of 80 aged respondents from two villages, that is, Goila and Madwana. For this, 40 willing participants in the age group 60 and above were selected from each village. Each member had a distinct and unique characteristic. The demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the respondents are described below.

There were no changes in the variables such as age, gender, marital status, religion, caste, educational status, occupations, and housing type as the similar sample of 80 elderly who were assessed at pre-intervention participated in post-intervention assessment. The living type and accommodation of the elderly remain unchanged in post-intervention assessment. There were few changes in the income level of the elderly in experimental village as about 7.5 per cent of the elderly started availing the government pension. Segment wise detailed post intervention assessment of the elderly have been presented below which examines the relevance of social work intervention in the area of the elderly care.

##### 4.1 Support System, Elder Abuse and Neglect

For improving the support system of the elderly and reduce elder abuse and neglect several intervention strategies were administered in *Madwana*. The intervention strategies include awareness and sensitisation programmes, counselling, focus group discussions, and integrated social work practice.



### Family Support

Pre-intervention study found that about 48 per cent of the respondents in *Goila* and *Madwana* were not receiving good family support. Post-intervention assessment found that after social work intervention about 25 per cent of the respondents have been benefited in *Madwana*, which shows a significant impact of social work intervention. Post-intervention data in Chart 4.6 reveals that about 5 per cent of the respondents have been increased who do not receive good family support in *Goila*.

### Social Support

Pre-intervention assessment showed that around 50 per cent of the respondents in the *Goila* and *Madwana* were not receiving good social support. Post-intervention assessment found that after social work intervention about 13 per cent of the respondents has been benefited who were not receiving good social support in *Madwana*. Post-intervention data in Chart 4.6 reveals that about 8 per cent of the respondents have been increased who do not receive good social support in *Goila*.

### Government Support

Pre-intervention study revealed that about 95 per cent of the respondents in *Goila* and 90 per cent in *Madwana* hardly receive any government support. Post-intervention assessment found that after social work intervention about 15 per cent of the respondents has been benefited who hardly receiving

government support in Madwana were. Post-intervention data in Chart 4.6 reveals that no respondent has been benefited for government support in *Goila* in the period of last six months.

#### *Elder Abuse*

Pre-intervention study showed that about 48 per cent of the respondents in *Goila* and 50 per cent in *Madwana* were experiencing elder abuse to a large extent in their day to day life. Post-intervention assessment found that after social work intervention, the elder abuse to a large extent has been reduced in 18 per cent of the respondents in *Madwana*, which shows a significant impact of social work intervention. Data in Chart 4.6 reveals that the elder abuse to a large extent has also been reduced in 8 per cent of the respondents in *Goila*.

#### *Neglect*

Pre-intervention data revealed that about 45 per cent of the respondents in *Goila* and 58 per cent in *Madwana* experience neglect to a large extent in their life. Post-intervention assessment found that after social work intervention, neglect of older people reduced greatly in 20 per cent of the respondents in *Madwana*. This obviously shows an important impact of social work intervention. Data in Chart 4.6 reveals that neglect of older people to a large extent has been reduced in 5 per cent of the respondents in *Goila* as well.

## V. CONCLUSION

The present chapter examined the social work intervention and its impact in the care of the aged on various aspects such as basic necessities, physical health, mental health, and support system. The post-intervention assessment reveals that the living conditions of the elderly were improved in the experimental village. About 5-25 per cent change has been found after intervention, which shows a significant impact of social work intervention in the care of the aged. The next chapter will be presenting the six case studies, which the worker dealt during the social work intervention.

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