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# **FAMILY ALIENATION OF OLD AGED PARENTS IN URBAN SRINAGAR OF KASHMIR VALLEY**

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**Abstract:** Old age and the aging process is a biological phenomenon which has its own dynamism largely beyond ones command. It is a regular feature in every society, which cannot be stopped. In the traditional family system old aged persons were respected as well as having the full control on the other members of family members. The younger generation were equally benefitted by their vast experience of life. The process of modernization, globalization, westernization, and invasion of western media, has revolutionised the whole family system both in respect of its structure and function. The globalization and urbanization process encouraged the migration of younger generation towards cities, to have better economic and living facilities. The younger generation became very professional and materialistic, who have the main priority to achieve socio economic growth in the society, rather than continuing traditional type of emotional affiliation with the elder members of family, especially with their parents. The changing perception and priorities of younger generation has revolutionised whole family system in the society. The aged persons especially the parents were the worst suffers by such transformation, as they were alienated from their own family members, and have no one to look after them in their absence, who rely mostly on their children's in their old age. This problem needs to be studied.

**Keywords:** Alienation, Family, Globalization, Migration, Old Age, Westernization.

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**Introduction:** Every society tends to view its retired and aging population within the structural and functional constructs, which operates for perpetuation and efficient conduct of that society. In the societies where the continuation of family and community norms are transferred from generation to generation by reigning elders, the position held by these persons is one of high esteem and respect. In traditional family system the elderly people make a significant contribution by sharing their vast experiences of life. Their experiences as well as suggestions were never ignored and were equally respected by the younger generation. The younger generation feel it as moral and religious obligation to look after them in their old age. The older and aged person have enjoyed social security against infirmities, losses, privileges of being heard by the younger generation and had dominated the high status in decision making of the family, is now fast disappearing in the urban way of life. There has been a significant change since independence, but the change has been particularly rapid in the past three decades or so. The elderly persons in the family in the Indian sub continent have lost the privileged position. Today, in most households, the elderly person is only an appendage just another person existing. With the advent of industrialization there has been a significant change in the family system. Joint families disintegrated and small nuclear modern families emerged where the young couple find no time to look after their parents. In such situation the position of old aged becomes very difficult to adjust with system of modern families, are being alienated even in their own families. In the cities where there is growth of individualism and with it the desire to be self-reliant, the clashes between generations, distress the old. Various problems faced by the urban elderly do not exist in the villages. In contrast to the rural population the city elderly population is quite different. Many from this group have taken recourse to old age homes. Along with the lonely, the helplessness they have differences with their Kith and kin perhaps the next generation, which force them to leave their home and enter the premises of old Age homes. The rapid industrial development and changing traditional economy from agrarian to industrial has sown the seeds of individualistic approach among the younger generation. They are searching for their own happiness, rather than sacrificing themselves for others like for the old aged persons in family.

**Literature Review:** Dandekar, K. (1966), in his study "The elderly in India" published by sage publication, has argued that long life is a cherished desire of man but most human beings are awfully afraid of becoming old. According to the author, the present society has become dominant by youth do not seem to care for those who had been occupying high positions and performing significant roles a few years earlier. That is the main reason most of us are apprehensive becoming old and quite a few of us would prefer as early death rather than becoming old, an age which is prone to various problems associated with the life.

It was revealed by the author that in old civilized societies, the older people enjoyed a high status because of their experience and knowledge needed for the socialization of the new generation. It was discussed by the author that industrialization pushed living standards upward and advance medical technology and thus increase human life expectancy. But although industrialization adds to the quantity of life, it has affected the quality of life of old aged persons. Contrary to the practice in the traditional societies, industrial societies give little power and prestige to the elderly people. The reason it that, with industrialization, the prime source of wealth shifts from land typically controlled by oldest members of the society to business and other goods managed by younger generation of the society.

**R. M, et al. (1991)**, has carried out a study on changes occurring rapidly in industrial and urban societies. Modern living also physically separates the generations as younger people move away to pursue their careers, depending less on their parents and more on their own earning power. Furthermore, because industrial and urban societies change rapidly, the skill traditions and life experience that served the old are the relevant to the young. Finally, the tremendous productivity of industrial nations means that all members of a society need to work. Thus, most of the very old and the very young play non productive role. The author has highlighted that the physical decline in old age is less serious than younger people think. But even so, older people endure more pain, become resigned to limiting their activities, to adjust, to greater dependence on others, lost dear friends and relatives.

**Methodology:** The present study is based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data is based on the field work carried out in urban Srinagar of Kashmir valley. The research tools like Interview schedule; observation method etc have been used to study the various reasons for the alienation of old aged persons in family. Whereas for the secondary data collection, different published research articles, books, magazines etc were used. The study was carried out in urban Srinagar of Kashmir valley. A sample of 50 old aged respondents, 25 male respondents and 25 female respondents were selected to study the problem in urban Srinagar. All individuals were more than or equal to 60 years of age. The sample was selected by adopting both stratified and purposive simple random sampling method.

**Findings of the Study:** Aging is a universal phenomenon in both rural and urban areas. The problems of aged persons are visible and exhibit a tremendous growth. But, this fact can't be ignored that the urban areas are always characterized by the acute problems for aged and elderly persons. The reasons may be attributed to the style of life, of the youngsters in the city where they have no time to look after the elderly persons.

**Table 1: Reason of Alienation in Family**

Theme	Response	Numbers	Percentage
Reason for alienation in family	Separation of family members	22	44.00
	Migration of children due to economic reasons	10	20.00
	Generation gap	10	20.00
	Any other	08	16.00
<b>Total</b>		50	100.00

**Source:** Field Work Carried Out In Urban Srinagar, 2017

The above table reveals that out of the total 50 respondents, 22 (44 percent) respondents affirm that due to separation of the family members they are facing serious alienation problem in the society, and 10 respondents i.e. 20 percent said that because of the migration of their children to other places due to better economic opportunities are facing loneliness and very much isolated, 10 respondents i.e. 20 percent replied that the generation gap is the main reason for their alienation in the family as the younger generation are fond of the modern sources of entertainment. It was found that 08 respondents i.e.16 percent reported that the reason for their alienation in family/society is due to health issues and idleness.

**Table 2: Effects on Health Due to Alienation**

Theme	Response	Numbers	Percentage
Effects on health due to separation from family members	Depression	25	50.00
	Hypertension	05	10.00
	other, health issues	20	40.00
<b>Total</b>		50	100.00

**Source:** Field work carried out in urban Srinagar, 2017

The above table reveals that alienation of parents in the family became a major reason of various health problems to them. Out of total 50 respondents selected for the study 25 respondents (50 percent) replied that they have become prone to serious mental illness like depression, anxiety and stress, because of their isolation from family members, 20 respondents (40 percent) said that they have indulged in various illnesses like Bronchitis, cataract, Migraine. A small percentage 5 respondent (10 percent) said that that have been diagnosed for hypertension.

**Conclusion:** The study reveals that modernization process, although brought socio-economic growth has affected both the structure and function of the family system. These changes were welcomed initially in the society as well as in family, but it has equally created many issue s/ problems. One of the major problems is being faced by the old aged parents. The modernization process encourages younger to migrate different places to explore better economic opportunities as well as living facilities. The traditional approach among younger generation is being replaced by the modern professional, were the influence of moral and traditional norms are fading away. The old aged parents were the worst suffers by the changes in the perception among younger generation.

**Limitations:** Although the present research was done with utmost care to study the alienation of old aged parents in urban Srinagar, there is always a possibility of some factual errors, because of the fact that a simple can never actually represent the whole. This is why the research can't be generalised to infer or form a final conclusion regarding the problems of old aged parents.

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