

Elder Abuse and Neglect: A Study in Rural Bangladesh

Abstract

Bangladesh is the eight largest countries in the world with a population of more than 160 million. The present statistics shows that the number of aged population is 12 million which represents 7.5 percent of the total population. Bangladesh is basically a country of rural societies and 80 percent of elderly people live in rural areas. Older individuals who are frail, alone or depressed as well as those with a physical disability or mental illness are vulnerable to abuse. Bangladesh society and culture is in transition now. In traditional joint family or kinship system, the elderly people used to enjoy care, respect and honor. But today, the traditional joint family is transforming into nuclear family due to poverty, over population, migration from rural to urban areas, changing social norms and values, globalization, high cost of living materials and so on. This changing situation has been creating a number of problems in older person's life such as unhappiness, elder abuse and neglect, deprivation, health and food problem etc. The aim of this study is to explore the nature, causes and consequences of elder abuse and neglect as well as draws some policy recommendations that will be helpful to address the problem of the elderly in Bangladesh. The study is both quantitative and qualitative in nature that represents the primary data. Survey method and case study method have been used in this study. Elder abuse affects older men and women across all socio-economic groups, cultures, races and ethnicities. Decreases in earning capacity, inability and economic dependency, health hazards, maladjustment, changing social values have a distinct role in the causation of older abuse. Elder abuse and neglect is a burning issue in Bangladesh which deserves the national attention to deal with the situation.