



INTERNATIONAL LAW
JOURNAL

**WHITE BLACK
LEGAL LAW
JOURNAL
ISSN: 2581-
8503**

Peer - Reviewed & Refereed Journal

The Law Journal strives to provide a platform for discussion of International as well as National Developments in the Field of Law.

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WHITE BLACK LEGAL is an open access, peer-reviewed and refereed journal provide dedicated to express views on topical legal issues, thereby generating a cross current of ideas on emerging matters. This platform shall also ignite the initiative and desire of young law students to contribute in the field of law. The erudite response of legal luminaries shall be solicited to enable readers to explore challenges that lie before law makers, lawyers and the society at large, in the event of the ever changing social, economic and technological scenario.

With this thought, we hereby present to you

ABUSE AND VIOLENCE AGAINST ELDERLY PERSONS: A CRITICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Violence against senior citizens in their own homes is a serious, underreported issue that affects their health, dignity, and access to justice. The current research investigates the prevalence, character, and legal protection measures provided to older victims in North 24 Parganas, West Bengal. According to a review of the literature and Field analysis, Financial dependency, the decline of joint family system and rising migration. Patterns that cause leaves the senior citizen vulnerable and alone are reasons of senior citizen abuse. In West Bengal, these elements, which indicate broader national trends, are principally visible. In spite of the existence of constitutional and statutory provisions, continuing space in legal Learning, access to justice and a functional enforcement method. The study evaluates the awareness, accessibility, and efficacy of legal frameworks, namely the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007. Data analysis will include descriptive statistics, regression analysis, and thematic assessment to determine patterns and gaps in legal interventions. The results are expected to shed light on law enforcement issues, socio-cultural barriers, and policy gaps, and thereafter suggest legal reforms, sensitization campaigns, and institutional support mechanisms. This research aims to inform the development of a more inclusive and protective legal framework for older persons experiencing domestic violence.

Keywords: Domestic violence, senior citizens, legal protection, West Bengal, Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, socio-legal study.

INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence against elderly citizens is a developing issue, usually neglected in society. Older adults, especially in domestic environments, can be subjected to physical, emotional, financial, or neglect-based abuse. In India, there are laws to protect their rights and dignity. The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007, requires children to give financial assistance and care to elderly parents. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 also offers safeguarding to elderly women who are abused in the home. Section 125 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) also enables senior citizens to want assistance from their children if they are neglected. In North 24 Parganas, as in most other places, implementing these legal safeguards is still an issue¹. This research aims to examine the effectiveness of current legislation and the testimonies of old victims, bringing to the fore the necessity of greater awareness and enforcement.

While it also includes violence in partner relationships, the word violence is also used to refer to violent actions and neglect that occur in "domestic" relationships, particularly inside the family. In more specific terms, it describes physical assaults such as thrusting, pinching, spitting and kicking². Sexual violence, as well as choking, burning, manus hitting, striking with various implements, stabbing, hurling boiling liquids, maiming, and pointing a pistol. Generally speaking, violence refers to mental, physical, and financial abuse, as well as persistent verbal abuse, profanity, and harassment, as well as denial of freedom, relationships with friends and family, and access to financial and private resources³.

Physical, psychological, sexual, and economic abuse of partners or relationships are all included in the government's definition of violence. Violence is already a complex and hidden problem, but there is a far greater risk that elder abuse may go unnoticed. The country's population is going through a period of transition. Nowadays, more than five hundred per cent of the population is young, and we may assume that our country will progress quickly because young people bear the duty. Nonetheless, 8.6% of the remaining population are mature voters or elderly citizens whose duty is to promote youthful energy. A significant demographic

¹ Punita Govil and Swati Gupta, 'Domestic Violence against Elderly People: A Case Study of India', *Advances in Aging Research*, 5.5 (2016), pp. 110–21.

² G S VENUMADHAVA, 'CRIMES AGAINST ELDERLY: A CONTENT ANALYSIS ON ISSUES CAUSING FEAR OF CRIME'.

³ Luana Araújo dos Reis and others, 'Expressão Da Violência Intrafamiliar Contra Idosos', *Acta Paulista de Enfermagem*, 27 (2014), pp. 434–39.

problem that affects every nation is ageing. According to this study, a range of violent situations are directed against senior members of the relationship, even if the victim's ageing carries with it new forms of violence. The use of violence usually occurs in later life when a person experiences mental changes and intense jealousy.

Reasons of Abuse

Emotional and financial reliance, as well as constantly shifting social characteristics, are the significant causes of elder abuse. In 2013, The primary reasons for elder abuse were "economic dependence of the abused" and "lack of adjustment". According to a 2015 study on juvenile conflicts, financial hardships in the home and property and inheritance issues are the leading causes of elder abuse.

Abuse Types

Senior citizens are subjected to a wide variety of mistreatment. J. Vonkova and M. Hunkova (2004) list the following as broad forms of violence: physical, mental, sexual, and financial abuse.

Physical:

For instance, kicking, sliding, shoving, hitting, hair actuation, threatening with a pistol, hurling things, confining the victim, and forcing them to a corner.

Mental:

Include mostly verbal forms, such as cursing, various forms of humiliation and shame, constant monitoring throughout the day, questioning, and threats of crippling.

Sexual

Include any sexual actions that victims are coerced into and undergo against their will.

Financial:

This implies preventing victims from having the opportunity to spend their personal or family money. Failure to care for an elderly dependent as a family member is also known as neglect of care.

Abuse in a systematic manner:

Hence, the transition from family to institutional care and the overwhelming social pressure to remain in institutional care are referred to as abuse in self-interest.

Preventing elder abuse:

Beresova claims that they are separated into three levels: Beresova (2002)

Prevention at the individual level:

Community involvement and volunteer charity endeavours may help keep in touch with the outside world, preventing loneliness and the possibility of creating possibilities for a few different types of violence against oneself.

Prevention at the family level:

It should focus on fostering and strengthening relationships with family members, including elder relatives. The vast bulk of the intergenerational old board Alternative relatives are seldom supported by them. Those are the ones who stand in for the younger cluster when it comes to maltreatment by informal nurses who work with family members. Usually, the culprit is the spouse, better half, children, and their partners⁴. They are generally distant relatives. Early observation of risk families or informal nurses is essential to identify obstacles.

Prevention at the community level:

Its activities centre on the newest approaches and types of family-centred medical treatment. At this stage, community members' enthusiasm for participating in activities supporting older people should also be stimulated. They must also be motivated to support individual and national initiatives that help families care for elderly loved ones. The goal of community prevention is to address occurrences of elder neglect and misconduct by urging people to report any early warning indications of pattern-related or severe elder abuse.

The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007

The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Persons Act was created in 2007 to provide senior persons and their ageing parents with maintenance assistance. The Act has 32 parts and seven chapters⁵. The Act supports their fundamental requirements, the creation and administration of institutions and services, the adjudication and resolution of issues in their best interests, the rights protected and acknowledged by the constitution, and issues related thereto.

The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005

40% of women globally suffer from domestic violence (DV), a severe and avoidable public health issue, at the hands of their spouses⁶. DV is any actual or threatened action by a male

⁴ Edinilsa Ramos de Souza and Bruna Soares Chaves Correia, 'Construction of Indicators for Assessing the Policy of Reducing Accidents and Violence for the Elderly Care', *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva*, 15.6 (2010), p. 2753.

⁵ Utsav Raj and Abhiruchi Galhotra, 'The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007- Helping the Conditions of the Elderly in India', *Indian Journal of Community and Family Medicine*, 5.2 (2019), pp. 157–61.

⁶ Ameeta Kalokhe and others, 'Domestic Violence against Women in India: A Systematic Review of a Decade of Quantitative Studies', *Global Public Health*, 12.4 (2017), pp. 498–513.

household member to obtain authority or control over a lady who may be his girlfriend, spouse, or female relative. The United Nations General Assembly's adoption in 1993 of the "Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women" provided impetus for policy action in this area. Subsequently, DV was thoroughly studied, yielding further information on its prevalence, causes, routes, and systematic redressal techniques. DV is pervasive, affecting people from all socioeconomic and cultural origins, often committed by those seen as protecting figures within the family. Until recently, India had a distinct civil law to handle the complexities of this intricate issue. The "Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDA) 2005" was passed into law in September 2005, ensuring that women's rights are respected and safeguarded.

Section 125 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC)

Section 125 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), 1973, gives legal redress to neglected dependents, including elderly citizens, through the provision to seek support from their offspring if they cannot sustain themselves. The provision ensures that elderly parents, who could be abandoned or economically deprived, get financial help for their day-to-day necessities like food, medical care, and shelter. The law applies to both fathers and mothers, biological or adoptive, and requires that children who have enough means should support their parents⁷. In case of denial of maintenance, the older adult may seek relief from the court, and non-compliance can lead to legal consequences.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Poulami Roychowdhury. In this research article titled "Illicit justice: Aspirational- Strategic Subjects and the Political Economy of Domestic Violence Law in India", published in the year 2019, Law & Social Inquiry has analysed Indian domestic violence cases, litigants sometimes seek illegal "compromises" out of court. An ethnographic and interview study examines how court matters become extralegal settlements. I suggest that survivors in India have an "aspirational-strategic" legal awareness, believing they need what the law offers but mistrusting the court system and enforcement of the law. They negotiate illegal settlements due to their distorted legal view. According to these studies, legal rights expansions may conflict with the rule of law. Depending on the legal, institutional, and political economy, citizens may react to

⁷ SATISH MEHRA, 'Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973', 2012.

rights by adopting new norms while disregarding legal regulations and processes⁸. Bidin, Asiah Yusoff, Jal Zabdi Mohd. In this research article titled “Asiah Bidin and Jal Zabdi Mohd Yusoff, ‘Abuse of the Malaysian Elderly: An Analysis on the Adequacy and Suitability of the Domestic Violence Act 1994 (Act 521) to Protect the Elderly Victim” Internationally, elderly abuse is nothing new. Several nations have implemented legislative systems to address and avoid the issue. Abuse of the elderly is considered domestic violence in Malaysia. The Domestic Violence Act 1994 (Act 521) addresses domestic violence issues and should be studied with the Penal Code. The Domestic Violence Act (DVA) protects victims and offers civil remedies, while the Penal Code penalizes abusers. Although there is a growing literature on elder abuse in Malaysia, little is known about the legal safeguards provided by the DVA to older victims. This research examines the effectiveness of civil remedies for abused elderly under the DVA and the Act's applicability in protecting them⁹.

Jan, Gulafroz. In this research article titled “India’s” Domestic Violence Act 2005” Domestic abuse against spouses has increased. Before 1983, domestic abuse in India was not a legal concern. Various marital laws recognize cruelty as a viable divorce reason yet lack prompt recourse to address familial violence. The Domestic Abuse Act constituted a substantial advancement towards tackling domestic abuse. The domestic violence act, despite its stated goal of protecting women, is poorly designed and may worsen their suffering rather than alleviate it. This does not negate domestic violence or the necessity to protect women from brutality. Emphasize that creating rights alone cannot solve societal issues. Without social improvements, legal reforms are useless. The Domestic Violence Act falls short of achieving its goal of social engineering. Starting with the premise that domestic violence is the norm, it introduces imprecise legal concepts, promotes social norms that contradict existing traditions, values, and morality, and creates a biased process lacking fairness and reasonableness. This article examines new terminology and its significance under the Domestic Violence Act¹⁰.

Chaurasia, Himanshu Srivastava, Shobhit. In this research article titled “Abuse, Neglect, and Disrespect against Older Adults in India” Historically, abuse, violence, and neglect against men

⁸ Poulami Roychowdhury, ‘Illicit Justice: Aspirational-Strategic Subjects and the Political Economy of Domestic Violence Law in India’, *Law & Social Inquiry*, 44.2 (2019), pp. 444–67.

⁹ Asiah Bidin and Jal Zabdi Mohd Yusoff, ‘Abuse of the Malaysian Elderly: An Analysis on the Adequacy and Suitability of the Domestic Violence Act 1994 (Act 521) to Protect the Elderly Victim’, *Journal of Management Research*, 7.2 (2015), pp. 71–81.

¹⁰ Gulafroz Jan, ‘India’s” Domestic Violence Act 2005”: A Critical Analysis.’, *Bangladesh E-Journal of Sociology*, 11.1 (2014)

and women have been a hidden societal issue, both globally and in India. The growing geriatric population in India raises concerns about their well-being. Elderly abuse is a significant health issue, but its causes are not yet fully understood. Insufficient primary research about elder abuse and neglect in India is attributed to an unwillingness to address intergenerational conflicts. The research aimed to ascertain the prevalence of elder abuse and evaluate variations in instances based on socioeconomic factors and chronic illnesses. The research used descriptive statistics, Chi-square tests, and binary logistic regression for analysis—the elderly's experiences of abuse, violence, neglect, or contempt. Out of the total 11% who reported elder abuse, 90% reported verbal abuse, followed by 52.5% disrespect and 45.21% neglect. Physical violence was prevalent among men, whereas 61% of women faced social neglect. Approximately 80% of seniors in rural regions experience various forms of maltreatment¹¹.

Kapur, Radhika. In this research article titled “Crime and Violence: Unfavorable on Living Conditions of Senior Citizens” Senior persons from all areas and classifications have been victimized by crime and violence. These harm people physically and mentally. These actions were committed by family and community members. Seniors must know how to avoid these behaviours. They must build good ties with family and neighbours. They must also lock doors and windows while alone in residences. Older people must know various methods and processes to prevent these actions. Regular medical checkups are needed for seniors. They must frequent medical and health care centres to maintain physical and mental wellness.

Additionally, they must use tactics that effectively increase one's quality of life. Crime and violence hurt seniors' lives. This research paper discusses understanding crime and violence among senior citizens, how criminal and violent acts harm senior citizens' health and well-being, types of criminal and violent acts, and Indian laws on senior citizen abuse¹².

Govil, Punita Gupta, Swati In this research article titled ‘Domestic Violence against Elderly People: A Case Study of India’ Adult population is growing in the nation. According to the 2011 census, 60.3% of inhabitants are 15–59 years old, and 8.6% are over 60. Seniors need respect, care, love, security, and health care, but our nation fails to deliver it. Adults are obvious

¹¹ Himanshu Chaurasia and Shobhit Srivastava, ‘Abuse, Neglect, and Disrespect against Older Adults in India’, *Journal of Population Ageing*, 13.4 (2020), pp. 497–511.

¹² Radhika Kapur, ‘Crime and Violence: Unfavorable on Living Conditions of Senior Citizens’, *Indian Journal of Social Science and Literature*, 1.1 (2023), pp. 31–36.

targets for violence and crime; thus, newspapers record many stories of abuse. Only reported issues are considered by society, but countless incidents of disrespect and neglect are ignored. Perpetrators who are close relatives or blood relatives make the problem worse. This rising insensitivity threatens society. Addressing this worrisome issue requires sincere efforts. This study reviews statistics on elderly people, their reliance ratio, issues, and ways to stabilise social and emotional stability¹³.

Maurya, Priya Chattopadhyay, Aparajita Rao, Smitha Sharma, Palak. In this research article titled 'Understanding Elder Abuse in India: Contributing Factors and Policy Suggestions', Elder abuse is a complex public health problem. This research strives to provide a succinct summary of elder abuse in India, specifically among persons aged 60 and above, at both national and state levels. This research intends to examine the prevalence and causes of elder abuse, focusing on the employment status of older persons, using current data. We also discuss the relative relevance of variables causing elder abuse's gendered difference. This research also suggests methods for preventing elder abuse. The 2020 Longitudinal Ageing Study in India found that although elder abuse is relatively low (5.22%), state-level disparities exist. Older women, those under 70, those with more family assets, those in rural regions, and Individuals in poor health have an elevated risk of abuse compared to others. To reduce abuse, income and education must be crucial. Economic differences account for about 10% of the gender disparity in elder abuse frequency¹⁴. Wei, Wenxing Balser, Sarah Nguyen, Ann W Qin, and Weidi. In this research article titled 'Elder Abuse in Older Adults with Dementia: Protective Factors and Adverse Effects', discussed the problem of domestic violence among elderly people, and its different types, such as financial, emotional, and physical abuse. It emphasizes the necessity for better care and protection of elderly victims, as domestic violence can cause long-term health issues, deterioration in mental health, financial exploitation, social isolation, and loss of autonomy. The research promotes an expansive approach, advocacy, legislative transformations, and victim-focused methods of closing policy loops and bringing systemic change. The research employs live case studies to highlight the relevance of offering enabling interventions and interventions. The study promotes focused therapy, advocacy programs, and legal reforms to impact domestic violence on older adults meaningfully. It ends by fostering a society that works proactively towards defending the rights and dignity of the elderly and eradicating domestic

¹³ Govil and Gupta.

¹⁴ Priya Maurya and others, 'Understanding Elder Abuse in India: Contributing Factors and Policy Suggestions', *Journal of Population Ageing*, 17.1 (2024), pp. 5–32.

violence¹⁵.

CONCLUSION

Abuse and violence against older persons are a serious issue, yet are neglected by society. After examining different provisions and legislation, it highlights that, although there is a strong legal and constitutional provision like the the *Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005*, the *Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007*, *Section 125 of the Code of Criminal Procedure*, but still many senior citizens go through neglect, verbal abuse and emotional abuse, economic exploitation and even physical assault and most of the time by their family. The study reveals that senior citizens' abuse is a serious problem affected by economic dependence, declining joint family system and migration. The situation in North 24 Parganas and most of the time by their family. The study reveals that senior citizens' abuse is a serious problem affected by economic dependence, declining joint family system and migration. The situation in North 24 Parganas mirrors these broader national trends, exposing persistent gaps in legal awareness, accessibility to justice, and proper enforcement of existing laws. To address this pressing concern, a comprehensive strategy is essential—one that includes effective implementation of legal provisions, stronger community awareness programmes, and coordinated welfare initiatives involving both governmental and non-governmental institutions. Ensuring dignity and security for the elderly is not only a moral duty but also a human rights concern, and ensuring a system that holds the elderly in financial independence, emotional well-being, and social respect.

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¹⁵ Wenxing Wei and others, 'Elder Abuse in Older Adults with Dementia: Protective Factors and Adverse Effects', *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 25.5 (2024), pp. 3827–42.

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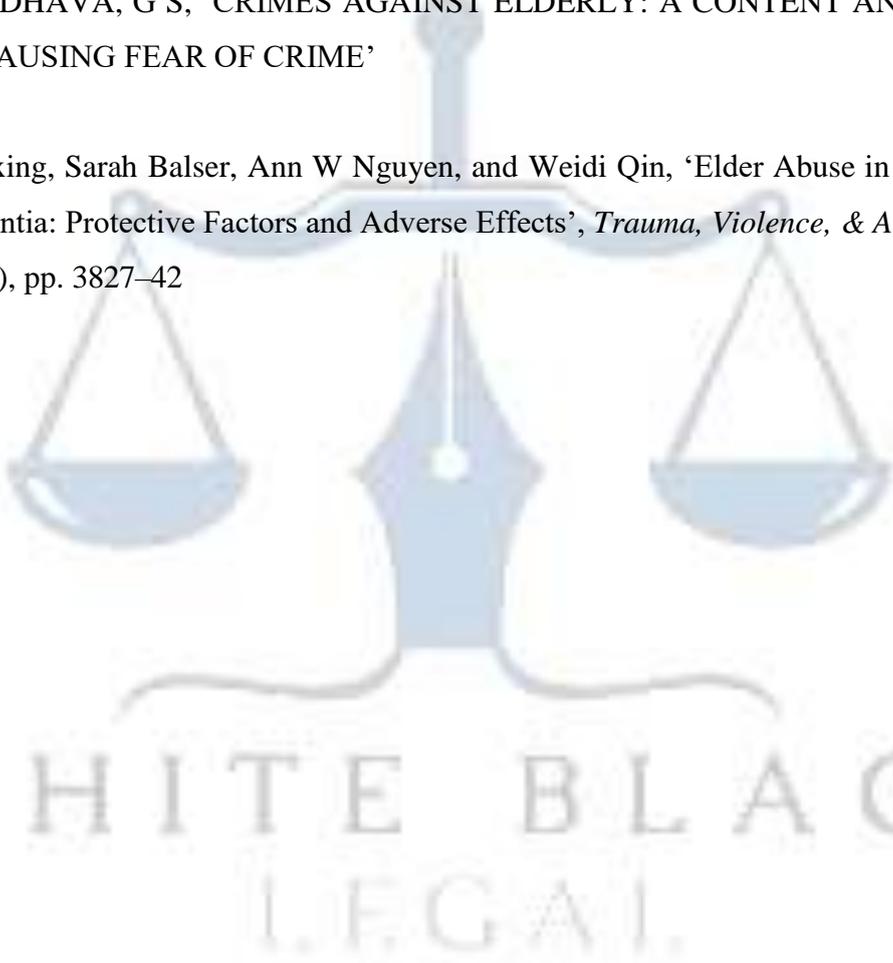
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