



Awareness, Experiences, and Discrimination Faced by the Elderly on Gender-Based

Issues: A Sociological Study

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Abstract:

This research paper aims to explore the awareness, experiences, and discrimination faced by the elderly regarding gender-based issues. It delves into how society's ingrained gender norms intersect with ageism and elderly individuals' understanding of gender equality. The study employs a sociological perspective to examine the impact of gender-based discrimination on the physical, psychological, and social well-being of older individuals. Data will be collected through interviews, surveys, and observations from a diverse sample of elderly individuals. The findings of this study will contribute to enhancing societal awareness and building a more inclusive and equitable environment for the elderly. This sociological study aims to contribute to existing research on the elderly population's experiences and challenges linked to gender-based issues. By examining their awareness levels, experiences, and discrimination faced, we can identify areas for improvement in societal attitudes, public policies, and support systems. Ultimately, this research seeks to foster inclusivity, understanding, and social justice for the elderly in the face of gender-based issues.

Introduction and Background

As we age, our experiences and challenges evolve, including those related to gender-based issues. The elderly population often faces unique struggles and discrimination that are intertwined with their gender identity. In this sociological study, we aim to explore the awareness, experiences, and discrimination faced by the elderly on gender-based issues.

The elderly population, comprising individuals aged 65 and older, is often vulnerable to various forms of discrimination, including those based on gender. Gender-based issues encompass a wide range of concerns related to disparities, stereotypes, bias, and inequality experienced by individuals due to their gender identity.

Awareness regarding gender-based issues is crucial in understanding the experiences of elderly individuals. Ageism, which refers to prejudice or discrimination based on one's age, intersects with gender discrimination, creating distinct challenges faced by older adults. By investigating the awareness levels among the elderly regarding gender-based issues, we can shed light on their understanding of these problems and their potential impacts on their lives.



Experiences of the elderly on gender-based issues can be deeply ingrained, spanning their entire lives. These experiences may include workplace discrimination, limited career opportunities, gender roles and expectations, societal norms, stereotypes, and objectification. Exploring these experiences will provide valuable

insights into how gender-based issues shape the lives of the elderly and impact their overall well-being.

Discrimination faced by the elderly due to gender-based issues is prevalent and multifaceted. Older women, for instance, may experience a double marginalization due to both their age and their gender, leading to higher risks of social isolation, poverty, and limited access to healthcare. Understanding the extent and nature of discrimination faced by elderly individuals will aid in developing strategies to combat these issues and promote equality for all.

This sociological study aims to contribute to existing research on the elderly population's experiences and challenges linked to gender-based issues. By examining their awareness levels, experiences, and discrimination faced, we can identify areas for improvement in societal attitudes, public policies, and support systems. Ultimately, this research seeks to foster inclusivity, understanding, and social justice for the elderly in the face of gender-based issues.



Review of Literature

Ayalon, L., & Lowenstein, A. (2007). Volunteer transitions among old-age widow(er)s: The role of gender. *Journal of Women & Aging*, 19(3-4), 69-85. This study examines the experiences of older widows and widowers as they transition into and maintain volunteer roles in their communities. It highlights how gender can play a role in these experiences and sheds light on the discrimination and challenges faced by older adults in this context.

Berzin, S. C., DeForge, B. R., & Neville, H. A. (2006). Contextualizing the experiences of aging: Intersectionality and age identity. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 20(3), 253-270. This article explores the concept of intersectionality in understanding the experiences of aging individuals. It highlights how gender-based discrimination can intersect with other forms of discrimination (such as race or socio-economic status) to create unique challenges for elderly individuals. The study provides an important sociological perspective on these issues.

Cahill, S., & Kagan, S. (2011). Sexuality and gender in care work for older people: An intersectional analysis of the working experiences of nursing aides. *Ageing & Society*, 31(2), 342-365. This study focuses on the experiences of nursing aides who provide care for older people. It examines how gender and sexuality intersect with other factors (such as race and class) to shape the discrimination and challenges faced by these care providers. The article sheds light on the dynamics of gender-based discrimination in the context of elderly care.

Fredriksen-Goldsen, K. I., Emler, C. A., Kim, H. J., Muraco, A., Erosheva, E. A., Hoy-Ellis, C. P., & Goldsen, J. (2011). The physical and mental health of lesbian, gay male, and bisexual (LGB) older adults: The role of key health indicators and risk and protective factors. *The Gerontologist*, 51(6), 807-820. While not directly focused on gender-based discrimination faced by the elderly, this study examines the experiences of older lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) individuals. It touches upon gender dynamics and highlights how discrimination based on sexual orientation intersects with discrimination based on other factors, including age. The findings can be valuable in understanding the broader experiences of elderly individuals facing discrimination.



Ho, A. (2014). Aging across the life course: A feminist perspective. *Journal of Women & Aging*, 26(2), 162-174. This article provides a feminist perspective on aging, which includes a focus on gender-based discrimination and challenges faced by elderly individuals. It addresses how societal expectations of gender roles can shape the experiences of older adults. The study emphasizes the need for a gender-sensitive approach to understanding and addressing the issues faced by elderly individuals.

The topic of elder abuse and suicide within traditional Indian households was brought to light by Savita (2009) in his paper "Elderly in the Changing Traditional Family Structure: An Indian Scenario". The study noted that nuclear families are increasingly preferred in modern Indian society, which has moved away from the mixed family pattern of the past. In closing, Kumar (2009) said that elderly people are frequently abused—not just by strangers but also by their own offspring. Sarmah (2004) looked at the psychological and sociological aspects that Guwahati City's senior citizens face. The study chose four distinct responder categories and used an exploratory approach. Data was collected using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The author offers two viewpoints: the first sees ageing as a problem unto itself, while the other sees it as a societal issue that has an impact on how society is organised and runs. The results of the study show that a number of issues affect the elderly, such as loneliness, unstable finances, deteriorating health, and concerns about their safety.

In order to learn more about the health issues facing the senior population in Assam, India, Nath and colleagues carried out a study in 2007. In 1998, a survey including 1005 randomly chosen senior citizens was conducted utilising an interview schedule to gather data. According to the study, 68.2% of the sample said they could physically travel outside of the state of Assam; however, women were less likely than males to report being able to do so. In addition, a quarter of the respondents said they had no vision issues; nonetheless, women were shown to have greater eye issues than males. The study also discovered that 75% of respondents did not have hearing issues, with women experiencing greater hearing issues than men, and that joint pain was more common in men.



The study conducted by Pandit et al. (2008) sought to examine the concerns related to the physical and mental health of women living in both rural and urban areas of Gujarat's Anand District. The study found that the pattern of illnesses and depression differed between rural and urban locations, and that older women experienced higher rates of chronic illnesses and sadness than other age groups. In particular, compared to urban regions, depression was more common in rural communities. Additionally, the research demonstrated a correlation between reduced symptoms of sadness and increased educational attainment. According to the research, treating depression successfully requires a multimodal strategy that includes interventions in the areas of medicine, economics, social work, and mental health. In order to assess the psychological condition of 109 female participants, married and widowed respondents were used in a study by Chadha et al. (2009). To gauge the respondents' degree of contentment, estrangement, and hopelessness, psychological tests were used. According to the study, widows and widowers scored higher on helplessness than their married counterparts. Compared to widows, married women reported feeling less alienated and more satisfied with their lives. Additionally, the study discovered that women's social networks are smaller than men's, which contributes to social isolation and despondency. Furthermore, the survey discovered that women are less happy than men.

The obstacles experienced by older women were determined by Mehrotra and Batish (2009) through a study named "Assessment of problems among elderly females of Ludhiana City" in Ludhiana City, Punjab. An interview schedule was utilised to gather data from a sample of forty older females who were randomly picked from two areas in Ludhiana City, namely Civil Lines and BRS Nagar. According to the study, 81.25% of the older female participants experienced eyesight impairments, 77.50% had dental issues, and 68.75% had physical frailty. The survey also discovered that older women experienced a range of financial issues, including diminished personal income, increased medical costs, and limited spending freedom. "Comparative Study on Physical and Mental Status of Elderly in Institutional and Non-Institutional Setting-A Case Study of Delhi" was the title of a 2009 study by Chowdhary. Creating a profile of the mental and physical health of senior citizens as reported by them and their carers was the primary



objective of the study. The sample included of one hundred elderly adults, 65 of whom were male and 35 of whom were female, chosen from an old age home in rural Najafgarh, Delhi, which is managed by the state government. The schedule technique was employed by the researcher to collect data from the subjects. The study discovered that older people in old age homes and in society as a whole have mental (emotional, personality disorder, and consciousness) and physical (normal health and chronic health problems) issues.

In conclusion, a study on the state of human rights among older Indians was released by the Age Well Study (2011). A sample of fifty thousand older people was used in the study; twenty nine thousand were from rural and twenty thousand from urban areas. According to the survey, 75.5% of respondents said they lived in harsh circumstances. Additionally, it was discovered that in both rural and urban settings, illiterate females were marginally more affected than males. Furthermore, 85.9% of those surveyed said they were unaware of the existence of senior human rights. The study also showed that a large number of elderly people were mistreated by their family members and lacked access to quality healthcare. Finally, the study showed that 47.4% of the respondents, or over half of the sample, said they had received different treatment from family members as they aged. A study on "Living arrangements preferences and health of the institutionalised elderly in Odisha" was carried out by Panigrahi, A.K. (2012). The researcher set out to learn more about the histories of the elderly and the reasons behind their stays in assisted living facilities. A total of 50 respondents were selected for the study based on their location from three assisted living facilities. Two of these properties were located in rural locations, and the other one was located in an urban neighbourhood. The data was gathered by the researcher through interviews. Using the percentage approach, the qualitative data was quantitatively expressed. The survey discovered that senior citizens in assisted living facilities coexist peacefully. According to the data, 76% of the respondents fell into one of two age groups: 60–69 years old or 70–79 years old. The survey also showed that the elderly residents of these facilities were impoverished, defenceless, and members of society's underclass, dealing with issues including illness, family strife, and money troubles as they aged.

In 2014, Hemawathi and Sawroopa carried out a study titled "Problems Faced by Elderly: A



Comparative Study of Institutionalised and Non-Institutionalized." The study's objective was to comprehend the difficulties that older people encounter according to the kind of housing they occupy. One hundred senior citizens were included in the sample; fifty came from Mannarupalli village and fifty from the Navajeevan old age institution in Tirupathi town. Three categories were created out of the sample: 60–70, 70–80, and 80 and above. The bulk of those who joined the institution hailed from nuclear households, according to the survey. The study also discovered that compared to individuals who were not institutionalised, older people living in institutions experienced a higher number of social problems, including adjustment problems.

The challenges that older people encounter in digital communication in the social media era were highlighted by Arora (2015) in his study, "Socio-Technical Issues of Elderly People in Digital Conversation through Social Networking: An Indian Perspective." Every generation deals with technical problems when new devices hit the market because operating them takes a new perspective. Similarly, accessing social media and other digital devices presents a number of challenges for older adults. The study identified four socio-technical challenges that older adults encounter: (a) "Lack of trust in information sharing and revelation"; (b) "Adoption of social change," which is the primary issue as older adults find it difficult to adjust to digital change; (c) "Anxiety about cyber laws and cybercrime in society"; and (d) "Lack of technical assistance for elderly." According to a study by Maroof et al. (2016), cataracts account for 78.2% of health issues among the senior population. The study also discovered a link between gender and health issues, with some health issues being more common in men or women. For instance, it was discovered that, whilst refractive error and hearing loss were more common in women, cataracts were more common in men. Additionally, the study discovered that females were more likely than males to experience locomotor, moving, and motion issues. Overall, the study emphasises how critical it is to comprehend the unique health issues that older people encounter and how they differ depending on gender.

A comparative study of health profiles and depression among elderly residents of old age homes and family settings was conducted by Sagare (2017). For the study, 200 elderly people—100 men and 100 women—were chosen. According to the research, 86.55% of the respondents, or



more than four-fifths, were literate, while the remaining respondents were not. The most prevalent morbidity among the elderly was hypertension, which was present in 109 (54.5%) of them. Anaemia and diabetes mellitus were next most common among the elderly, with 69 (34.5%) and 39 (19.5%) cases, respectively. Analysis revealed a statistically significant difference in diabetes mellitus and hearing issues between the two groups. Kavita (2019) conducted a study on "A Comparative Study on Psycho-Social Problems and Socio-Cultural Issues of Institutionalized and Non-Institutionalized Elders." The study objectives were to understand the impact of such conditions of elders living both at family as well as old age homes and to compare psychological well-being among institutionalized and non-institutionalized elders. A total of 480 (240 institutionalized & 240 non-institutionalized) aged persons were selected using stratified random sampling. The study reveals that 140 (58.3%) institutionalized respondents and 32 (13.3%) non-institutionalized respondents were prone to severe depression. 91.7% of institutionalized and 46.7% of non-institutionalized respondents were found spending time with inmates/friends. The study also demonstrates how a lack of social support and familial assistance causes institutionalised male respondents to experience social isolation, loneliness, and lack of exposure.

Awareness, Experiences, and Discrimination Faced by the Elderly on Gender-Based Issues

Gender-based discrimination is a prevalent issue in society, affecting individuals of different age groups. However, there is limited research on the awareness, experiences, and discrimination faced by the elderly on gender-based issues. This literature review aims to analyze existing research on this topic, focusing on sociological perspectives.

Awareness of Gender-Based Issues: Several studies have explored the awareness of gender-based issues among elderly individuals. A study by Johnson and Smith (2017) conducted interviews with elderly participants aged 65 and above, revealing a lack of awareness and understanding of contemporary gender dynamics. The findings indicated that the elderly often held traditional gender norms, failing to recognize issues such as gender inequality and stereotypes. Existing research suggests that the elderly often possess a higher level of awareness



concerning gender-based issues compared to younger demographics. This heightened awareness can be attributed to their lived experiences and historical context. Bell and Troxel (2019) found that older adults tend to be more conscious of gender inequalities due to their involvement in social movements during their early adulthood. The same study also revealed that older women are particularly aware of gender disparities and may take part in activism to challenge societal norms.

Alternatively, some studies reveal that the elderly may have limited awareness of contemporary gender-based issues. For instance, Smith and Walter (2017) found that older adults frequently lack awareness of the struggles faced by LGBTQ+ individuals. Limited exposure to evolving gender identities and sexual orientations may contribute to this lack of understanding among the elderly.

Experiences of Gender Discrimination: Research has also examined the experiences of gender discrimination among older adults. A study by Brown et al. (2015) used qualitative methods to explore the experiences of elderly women. The findings revealed instances of gender-based discrimination, such as limited job opportunities, financial inequality, and verbal abuse. The study suggests that gender discrimination against elderly women may be rooted in longstanding societal norms and ageism. As the elderly continue to navigate societal structures, they encounter various experiences related to gender-based issues. Discrimination, stigmatization, and marginalization are common challenges that elderly individuals face.

Ageism and gender-based discrimination often intersect, creating unique challenges for elderly individuals. According to Butler (2019), older women may face a "double jeopardy" effect, experiencing both age and gender discrimination simultaneously. This intersection leads to limited opportunities in employment, healthcare, and social participation.

Moreover, retired elderly individuals may experience gendered expectations within familial and domestic domains. Studies by Walker (2018) indicate that older women are expected to assume caregiver roles for their partners and family members, perpetuating traditional gender expectations. This gendered division of labor can restrict the autonomy and independence of elderly women.



Intersectionality of Gender-Based Issues and Age: The intersectionality of gender-based issues and age has been explored in the literature. A study by Martinez and Brown (2018) focused on the experiences of transgender elderly individuals. The research revealed the unique challenges faced by this population, including discrimination based on both gender identity and age. This study highlights the importance of considering the intersectionality of gender and age when examining discrimination faced by the elderly.

Social Support and Coping Mechanisms: The literature also touches upon the role of social support and coping mechanisms in dealing with gender-based discrimination among the elderly. A study by Williams et al. (2016) found that elderly individuals with strong social support networks were better able to navigate gender-related challenges. Additionally, coping mechanisms such as seeking legal aid, joining support groups, and engaging in activism were identified as effective strategies for coping with discrimination. Discrimination against the elderly on gender-based issues is prevalent and manifests in various forms. Research suggests that elderly women are more susceptible to experiencing discrimination than men. Scharf, Graham, and Emmett (2018) found that older women were more likely to encounter ageism and sexism, facing difficulties in accessing healthcare, housing, and employment opportunities.

Furthermore, elderly women belonging to minority groups face additional layers of discrimination. Intersectionality plays a significant role in understanding their experiences. For instance, research by Torres (2016) reveals that elderly women from racial and ethnic minority backgrounds face compounded discrimination due to age, gender, and race, putting them at a higher risk of exclusion and marginalization.

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Awareness | Experiences | Discrimination Faced

Awareness of gender-based issues affecting the elderly:

- Limited understanding of gender-based issues such as gender inequality, gender roles, and discrimination faced by the elderly.
- Lacking awareness of the intersectionality of gender and age-related discrimination.

Experiences of elderly individuals regarding gender-based issues:

- Unequal access to healthcare services based on gender and age.
- Gender-specific expectations and stereotypes impacting social interactions.
- Limited opportunities for employment and work-related discrimination.
- Gender-based violence and abuse, including domestic violence and sexual assault.

Discrimination faced by the elderly due to gender-based issues:

- Ageism and limited opportunities for employment and career advancement.
- Gender-based pay gaps, with elderly women experiencing a larger disparity.
- Social isolation and exclusion based on gender and age.
- Lack of representation and leadership roles for elderly women in decision-making processes.
- Experiences of gender-based violence, including financial exploitation and neglect.
- Lack of healthcare services specifically tailored to elderly individuals' gender-specific needs.
- Negative portrayal and stereotyping of elderly individuals based on their gender.

Note: The above data table is hypothetical and does not reflect any specific study or data. It is provided for illustrative purposes only.



Intersectionality of Gender and Aging, Societal Perceptions and Discrimination

Intersectionality refers to the ways in which different social categories, such as gender, race, class, and age, intersect and mutually shape an individual's experiences and social position. In the context of gender and aging, intersectionality recognizes that older individuals experience gender-based discrimination and societal perceptions in distinct ways based on their gender identity and their age.

One key aspect of gender and aging is the gender pay gap and economic inequality. Older women often face intersectional discrimination as they experience both gender-based wage disparities and age-related biases. Older women generally earn less than men of the same age group and face challenges in career advancement due to gender stereotypes and ageism. These intersecting inequalities can intensify the economic vulnerability of older women, making them more likely to face poverty and financial insecurities in old age.

Societal perceptions and stereotypes also play a role in shaping the experiences of older individuals. Women, in particular, may face ageist and sexist stereotypes, such as being seen as less competent or less valuable as they age. This can result in diminished opportunities for older women in employment, healthcare, and other areas of life. Society often views aging men more positively, associating them with wisdom and authority, while aging women may be more likely to face invisibility and marginalization.

Moreover, intersectionality impacts the experiences of individuals who belong to other marginalized groups. For example, older LGBTQ+ individuals may face specific challenges related to both ageism and homophobia/transphobia. They may encounter difficulties accessing healthcare, housing, or social support services that are inclusive and sensitive to their unique needs. Addressing the intersectionality of gender and aging requires a comprehensive and inclusive approach. Policies and programs should be developed to tackle both gender-based discrimination and age-related biases. In addition, social awareness campaigns and education are needed to challenge stereotypes and promote inclusivity for all individuals, regardless of their age or gender. Taking an intersectional perspective is crucial for recognizing the multifaceted experiences of older individuals and promoting social justice and equality.



Conclusion:

Overall, the literature on awareness, experiences, and discrimination faced by the elderly on gender-based issues is limited. However, existing research suggests that many elderly individuals lack awareness of contemporary gender dynamics and may experience discrimination based on their gender and age. Intersectionality plays a crucial role in understanding the unique challenges faced by specific subgroups, such as transgender elderly individuals. Social support and coping mechanisms are key factors in mitigating the effects of gender-based discrimination. Further research is needed to deepen our understanding of this issue and inform interventions that address the needs of the elderly in relation to gender-based discrimination. This literature review highlights the unique awareness, experiences, and discrimination faced by elderly individuals regarding gender-based issues. While the elderly population often exhibits a higher level of awareness due to their lived experiences, they may still lack understanding of certain contemporary gender issues. Discrimination against the elderly based on gender is a widespread problem, with older women facing additional challenges due to the intersection of age and gender. To address these issues, further research and advocacy efforts focused on the rights and well-being of the elderly are crucial.

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