

Rights of Senior Citizens in Bangladesh: An Overview

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ABSTRACT

Bangladesh is a heavily populated country with populations about 164 millions. Presently there are over 10 million elderly people in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh due to better quality of life, the number of elderly people is increasing swiftly. It is seen that there should have special rights of senior citizens in our country. It is an initial challenge because the senior citizens will have different needs and require many care-giving facilities. Since Bangladesh does not have a particular social welfare system for the senior citizen, we should identify the rights of them. The senior citizens have basic rights to health and nutrition, protection, participation, recreation, companion and specially health and medical services. The new generations of our country have to be reactive, knowledgeable and focused about their duties and responsibilities towards the senior citizens. Taking appropriate attention of the senior citizens is our moral obligation.

KEYWORDS: senior citizen; situation; elderly; rights; Bangladesh

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I. INTRODUCTION

A person chiefly passes five stages in his lifecycle. The phases are infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood and old age. Old age begins after sixty years of age and finishes in death. Old age is one of the weak situations in a natural process of life. In this stage, people experience decreased physical strength and deteriorating health conditions with age related disease. All over the world proportion of elderly are increasing where numbers of children are decreasing (Barikdar, Ahmed, & Lasker, 2016).

The current population of Bangladesh is 164,121,242 as of Wednesday, February 26, 2020, based on Worldometer elaboration of the latest United Nations data (2020). State Minister for Social Welfare Sharif Ahmed has said that currently there are over one crore elderly people in Bangladesh and their number is increasing by 4.41 percent every year (Shaon, 2019).

Old age is a natural consequences of human life. In developed countries over 65 years old people are considered as senior citizen. But internationally recognized and UN has declared that above 60 years old people will be treated as senior citizen (Das, 2019). When people become senior citizen, we as well as the country should give special care and facilities for them. In this article, we shall try to identify the rights of senior citizens in Bangladesh and will discuss about how to do welfare of the senior citizen in Bangladesh.

II. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of the study is to discuss the senior citizens' rights of Bangladesh. Bangladesh is a developing country in the world. The people of this country are not aware about their rights. In this article, we have tried to discuss who are senior citizens, what are their rights, how to implement the rights for the advantage of the country. If the senior citizens' rights are applied correctly, we shall have a pleasant society in the country.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Many literature has been read and evaluated to write this article. A senior member of a family plays a role as an umbrella. All of us should develop respectful attitude towards them. For the senior citizens, the state should provide special facilities in different sector (Reazul, 2018). Most elderly people in Bangladesh suffer from problems such as lack of financial support, chronic diseases and absence of proper health and medicine facilities, exclusion and negligence, deprivation and socio-economic insecurity. The degree and extent of these vulnerabilities would likely intensify in near future. The plight of the elderly is extreme in villages. One of the most common tasks of the elderly is taking care of their grandsons and granddaughters. However, traditional family bonds and the community-based care system are gradually breaking down. And many elderly persons are neglected by their own children, be it in villages or cities (Rashid, 2019).

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IV. METHODOLOGY

To write this article different methodologies have been approached. Various articles, journals, newspaper, books, websites have been analyzed to collect necessary information. Interviews have been taken from some elderly person to understand their problem and what solutions they required.

Definition of Elderly people/Senior citizen

Most people above 60 years of age are considered as 'old'. Those who are 60 years and above make up the elderly section of any population. Though this age limit also applies to Bangladesh, in reality people in this country become older earlier because of poverty, and the conditions related like hard labor, malnutrition, illness and their geographical condition. According to The National Policy on Elderly 2013 of Bangladesh, "People aged 60 years or above will be accepted as senior citizens." (Welfare, 2014)

Problems faced by the senior citizens in Bangladesh

In our society, senior citizens have to face the following problems:-

Familial Problem: Once there was joint families in the country. At that time senior citizens played a vital role in the family. But joint families has broken down into small families due to the industrialization, civilization and changing in the economic lifestyle of human being. There is no place of senior person in the nuclear family. Senior citizens are suffering from many diseases but there is none to look after them. Even there is no people to give them company or talk with them. As a result they become victim of loneliness and depression. In many cases, as both husband and wife are working in offices, the elderly people look after the children, take them to school, make shopping of household products and also perform the household activities. These types of work become difficult for the elderly people due the old age. Many times, senior citizens are considered as the burden of the family.

Economical Problem: Most of the senior citizens become helpless due to not having own income or personal savings. They have to become dependent to their children. They cannot do anything with their own desire. Specially, senior citizen of middle class or lower class family fall in this problem. Many of them become penniless due to the expenditure of their children's education and marriage. Somebody becomes destitute for flood, natural disaster and river breakdown. In this situation, it becomes difficult for the children to bear the burden of old parents due to the lack of enough income and ability. Although the children has willingness, they cannot serve their parents.

Physiological: Physical strength of people become lower at old age. Many types of diseases make house in their body. In this time man needs some rest. But many of the senior citizens of Bangladesh cannot receive this rest. Even they don't get the medical benefit when they become sick. They don't have ability to buy the medicine for diseases.

Socio-cultural: Once upon a time senior citizens were respected in the society. Their opinions were given priority in the society. This type of culture is not seen now-a-days. There are various reasons for this type of culture such as the catastrophe of values in society, lack of ethical education, influence of foreign culture, self-centered attitude etc. Senior citizens are considered unnecessary in the family and society. Their opinion are not given emphasized. Nobody has time to sit beside them even nobody has time to listen them. There have rare opportunity of entertainment or leisure tourism for them.

Psychological: Due to the cornerstone condition of senior citizen in the family and society, they feel inferiority all the time. They start to think neglected and helpless. This inferiority complex increases due to the lack of own ability with physical sickness and loneliness. In that case, amnesia of old age creates extra problem for the senior citizen.

V. RECOMMENDATION TO ACHIEVE THE RIGHTS OF SENIOR CITIZENS

As the rules of the life, every person once becomes older or senior citizen in the society. And in old age, senior citizens fall into many financial and physiological problems. Since they have lost the income power, there importance in the society becomes lower. They fall into various types of negligence in the society. So, there rights must be achieved. As our findings we recommend the following rights that should be achieved for the blessings of the senior citizens:-

Older home: It is necessary to build older home in every district of the country to take proper care of the senior citizens. By building older home, responsibility to the senior citizen can be served properly.

Discount service: Necessary steps can be taken to provide discount service for the senior citizen in hospital, clinic or in bus and train fare. In every health service and transportation service senior citizens should be got discount facility.

Exercise facility: Exercise is necessary to keep fit the body of old people. In order to keep them fit and healthy; gymnasium, exercise field, running park should be established in every locality.

Correct food habit: Providing correct food to the older people is another right of older people. Senior citizens must be motivated to ensure the changing of correct food habit in their life.

Transport facility: When people become old, they need extra transport to visit one place to another. Special transportation facility with reduced cost can be provided to the senior citizen so that they can travel easily from one place to another.

Non-government organizations: Various non-government organizations (NGOs) can play a vital role for the enhancement of the senior citizen. NGOs can take necessary initiative to offer financial and technical support to the senior citizen of the country.

Job facility: Another rights of senior citizen is to create job opportunities for them and recruit older people in suitable job facilities. By taking necessary steps, older people can be given training to make them able to do jobs as per their ability and qualification.

Create welfare fund: To achieve the rights of senior citizen in our country, various welfare fund can be created for them. By creating appropriate welfare fund for the older people, they can be provided a better living in the society.

Separate queue: In order to establish the rights of senior citizens in the country, separate queue system can be developed in various service providing organizations such as banks, telecom service, financial service, health service, transportation service. Separate queue will enable them to think about their personality and respect.

Motivation to children: It is very important to motivate children to take proper care of their parents and grandparents when they reach in old age. A loyal child can establish the proper rights of their elderly parents.

Special care to old women: It has be analyzed that old women stay alone than the old men. Because father has properties. If children do rough behavior with father, they can be deprived from the properties. Father can easily imposed their right to the children but mother cannot do that. So, special care should be given to old women in the society.

Government action: Government can play a vital role to establish the rights of senior citizens by applying the laws and regulations. Proper actions from the government can provide the senior citizens' right from their children as well as from the society. Special allowances from the government should be provided to them regularly.

News media: If the news media of the country show promotional program to take care of our elder people, it will become easier to establish the rights of senior citizens. Various advertisement, documentary, motivational program can be telecasted to the media to inform and motivate the rights of senior citizens.

VI. CONCLUSION

In our society and relatives, we can find many senior citizens. From our neighbors or if we go outside we find many senior persons who are passing through the roads. Once upon a time, they were not old. They did many works for the well-being of the society. We should remember that once we will become old. As the old people have less ability to work, but they can serve us by their knowledge and experience. Senior citizens are the assets of the society. In the developed country of the world, there various facilities and opportunities for the senior citizens. Likewise, in our country, the rights of senior citizens should be considered in priority basis. We have to create a positive view and attitude toward the senior citizen of the country.

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