



Are Elders “A Burden or A Blessing” Nowadays?

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In Sri Lanka, 12.3% of the population is aged 60 or older, making it the country with the highest proportion of older adults in South Asia. By 2050, the world's population of people aged 60 years and older will double (2.1 billion). The aging population also means there will be growing demand for aged-care services in the near future. An increase in life expectancy, although desirable, has led to new challenges for the modern world.

Elderly individuals experience biological, psychological, and physiological deterioration, noticeable inability to maintain their functions, and difficulties in their daily life activities. Limitations in daily life activities negatively affect elderly individuals' quality of life and require care. Thus, Care is a fundamental human requirement.

Elders are more likely to have frailty and multimorbidity, and this would increase the burden of their caregiver. Multimorbidity refers to the coexistence of multiple chronic conditions in an individual while Frailty is defined as an age-related state characterized by reduced strength and physiologic malfunctioning. They become elders rather than born as elders. Thus, we need to consider them as specific aged population with special concerns over “Caring” as they have Common medical problems as well as Psychosocial issues.

The problem of ageing populations has become a matter of great concern in rich countries even. Therefore, the provision of care for the elderly should be considered not so much as an act of generosity but as the repayment of a debt of gratitude.” The contributions they have made to our families and society, their wisdom and experience cannot be easily underestimated.

The Physiological changes with ageing is inevitable and progressive in nature. The presentation of illness among elders is atypical and closely associated with co-morbidities or even multimorbidities. The elderly can be seen as burdens rather than

blessings. Sometimes, we are quick to forget the sacrifices our parents made for us when they are in need of care themselves. The care and assistance they need and the respect they deserve as human persons need to be valued. We may not value the wisdom they have acquired through living long lives, and we can discredit their advice as “outdated”.

Not all elderly people need or want constant, live-in care in their children’s homes. They may prefer to live in a community with other people their age, or they may be quite capable of complete independence. Thus, investing a little to engage the elderly in communities can improve the health and well-being of the elderly. It can also improve the health and well-being of communities as well.

Rather than looking upon the growing numbers of elderly as a burden, it should be considered as a blessing for society. It is much appropriate to realize all that we owe the elderly and to honor them as a blessing, perhaps we need to slow down a bit and look at each one as if they were our own parent or grandparent. It’s important to learn the differences between the many elder care solutions and can make the right choice for our elderly parents or other loved ones. Maybe we need to see ourselves in them.

Nowadays, the attitudes of a society become increasingly insensitive with regard to the blessingness of human life. Sadly, in transaction-driven market economies, where activities must have a monetary value to be ‘valuable’, the contributions of the elderly to society are not valued. It may be due many factors such as increased life expectancy, coupled with the nuclearization of families, their day-to-day maintenance, and dependence on others for age-related difficulties, multimorbidities and etc.

It is very important to try to convert the ‘problem’ of the elderly into a ‘solution’ Thus, it is a difficult challenge for the lives of elderly people. In such a situation, it is our responsibility that instead of keeping them aside, they should be integrated into the lives of communities to take care of their physical and mental care, where they can contribute enough to improve social conditions as well. If they are in need of financial assistance, we should help them. If they are sick, we should take care of them. If they need a place to stay, we should offer the best

However, during prolonged and unsupported caregiving, caregivers can face several challenges, including intense emotional distress, fatigue, sleep disorders, and difficulty maintaining the energy needed to provide care. There are going to be more women than men in the 60+ age group and the problem increases for them due to greater economic dependence. Inadequately organized care services may lead to more care burden, psychological stress, and emotional problems for those caring for the elderly. Thus, the role of health professionals has a significant impact on caregivers’ health and well-being.

Current economic crisis induces younger generation to move out of country, will definitely create a gap in caring our elders in the future in many ways. The solution is to see the elderly as a blessing, not a burden. The elderly is becoming the fastest growing, but underutilized resource available to humanity. They should be integrated into the lives of communities where they can make a substantial contribution to improving social conditions. A great benefit of these 'inter-generational linkages as the social capital they accumulate and the cohesion they enable within communities.

The integration of elders can help communities to survive and to thrive. Encourage team work with family and other providers and accept the greater heterogeneity among the aged. Better to approach the elderly with a "sort out" rather than a "rule out" view of illness and disability.

It was well said that "Every generation can learn from the experience and wisdom of the generation that preceded it," Elders are different in many aspects even though being considered as one group of age specific population. Thus, The elderly should be seen as a blessing, not a burden.

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