

Siva Prasad Bose, Joy Bose
Senior Citizens Abuse in
India



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Dedicated to all senior citizens in India who are facing
abuse, or who have faced abuse in the past

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Preface

Abuse of senior citizens is often an unspoken issue in India. Compared to other kinds of abuse, senior citizen abuse is unique in the fact that it often happens within the same household in which the senior citizens are staying, the abusers are family members on whom the person is dependent and most often the abuses go unreported.

Even though traditionally Indian culture promotes respect for senior citizens, with the changing lifestyles and moving away from joint families and even nuclear families, abuse has become a big issue. Some people may treat their senior citizen parents or family members as a burden and not look after them well, others may be more interested in their property to which they may hold the title, and ill treat them in order to get rights to the property. This problem may be becoming worse because of the Covid pandemic, since senior citizens may be less mobile, less familiar with apps and services and also scared to move out for fear of catching the disease.

Moreover, senior citizens are often scared psychologically of courts and police and may be unfamiliar with laws protecting them, in case of abuses. Lack of familiarity with technology is another big problem, since many of the protections depend on access to the internet and filing online complaints at various web portals and senior citizen helplines. Because of all this, senior citizens even if they face abuse are reluctant or not able to report it.

Although laws and institutions do exist in India to prevent abuse and provide relief to senior citizens, in practice there may be lack of awareness of such laws, also it may be difficult for senior citizens to access these protections due to reasons mentioned. Hence, in this book we focus on the practical steps that a senior citizen or their well-wishers need to take to obtain support and protection.

Important Law Books/ References Consulted

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- Reports by HelpAge India and AgeWell Foundation

About the authors

Siva Prasad Bose is a writer of introductory books on Indian laws. He is currently retired after many years of service in Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Limited. He received his engineering degree from Jadavpur University, Kolkata and has a law degree from Meerut University, Meerut. His interests lie in the fields of family law, civil law, law of contracts, and any areas of law related to power electricity related issues.

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What is senior citizens abuse

Abuse can be defined as cruel or violent treatment of any person that is intended to harm that person, especially when coming from a person who is trusted. When the person being abused by someone (the abuser) is a senior citizen, it can be termed as elderly abuse or senior citizen abuse. It can be one incident of abuse or multiple repeated incidents. It can also be lack of an action, such as deliberate neglect of the needs of an elderly person. It can take various forms, and effects both male and female senior citizens.

The United Nations and World Health Organizations have highlighted elder abuse, or senior citizens abuse, as a global issue that effects millions of older people around the world. The UN General Assembly passed resolution 66/127, designating June 15 as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day to raise awareness about this problem.

In this chapter, we look at the various types of abuse which senior citizens might face in India.

1.1 Physical abuse

Physical abuse includes physical violence to the body, such as by beating. It can also include other forms of harm such as depriving someone of food or shelter, especially if that person was or is dependent on the abuser. It can take forms such as evicting a senior citizen out of the house where they were residing together with the abuser, neglect by not giving medicines or feeding them bad or stale food or not giving them regular meals altogether.

Senior citizens may be physically weak due to old age and may be helpless to fight back at such abuse, especially from close family members with whom they are living and on whom they are dependent for basic necessities.

1.2 Mental, emotional or psychological abuse