

# The Golden Ties: Intergenerational Care and Elderly Wellbeing in Families

Dr. P. Nathiya<sup>1</sup>, and Dr. V. Sudha<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Associate Professor Department of Social Work, Nehru Arts and Science College, Coimbatore

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor Department of Business Administration, Nehru Arts and Science College, Coimbatore

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the evolving role of elderly individuals within families, highlighting their vital contributions to cultural continuity, intergenerational bonding, and emotional stability. As demographic shifts and modern family structures reshape caregiving dynamics, many elderly individuals face challenges such as neglect, isolation, and loss of dignity. The study emphasizes the need for supportive, inclusive family environments that uphold their self-worth and ensure their active participation in family life. Promoting such environments is essential not only for the wellbeing of older adults but also for fostering holistic health within families and communities.

**Keywords:** Elderly care, family dynamics, intergenerational bonds, emotional wellbeing, dignity, social inclusion, aging population, community health.

## INTRODUCTION

The role of elderly individuals within families is a vital yet often overlooked aspect of social wellbeing. As populations age and family structures evolve, ensuring that older adults receive not only adequate care but also retain their dignity and sense of belonging has become increasingly important. The elderly brings with them a wealth of wisdom, experience, and cultural continuity, making their inclusion in family life essential for nurturing intergenerational bonds. However, challenges such as neglect, isolation, and dependency often threaten their physical and emotional wellbeing. This project explores the dynamics of elderly care within families, emphasizing the need to create supportive environments that uphold their dignity and foster a genuine sense of belonging, thereby promoting holistic family and community health.

### The Importance of Family Support\*

Family plays a vital role in providing emotional, physical, and mental support to elderly members. By doing so, we not only improve their quality of life but also preserve their sense of identity and self-worth. Simple gestures like regular conversations, shared meals, and inclusive activities can bring immense joy and comfort.

### Challenges Faced by the Elderly\*

However, many elderly individuals face challenges such as social isolation, health issues, and neglect. It's crucial for families to recognize these challenges and work together to address them. By providing a supportive environment, we can help our seniors maintain their physical and mental well-being.

### Creating a Supportive Environment\*

To ensure our elderly family members live with dignity and belonging, we can:

-Spend quality time with them, listening to their stories and experiences

- Encourage their participation in family decisions and activities
- Provide access to healthcare and social services
- Foster a sense of community and connection within the family.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Low, L. F., & Fletcher, J. (2015)**

**Title:** A systematic review of the impact of family caregiving on caregiver mental health and wellbeing

**Journal:** Australian Health Review

### Summary

This review highlights the mental health impacts on family members who provide care for elderly relatives, particularly focusing on stress, depression, and caregiver burden. The study found that while family caregiving is often rooted in love and obligation, the lack of support systems can compromise the caregiver's wellbeing and, in turn, affect the quality of care provided to the elderly. The review emphasizes the need for policies that support both caregivers and care recipients to maintain dignity and relational harmony within the family structure.

**Van Wijngaarden, E., Leget, C., & Goossensen, A. (2018)**

**Title:** Experiences and needs of older people regarding dignity in care: A qualitative meta-synthesis

**Journal:** BMJ Open

### Summary

This meta-synthesis explored the perspectives of older adults on what constitutes dignified care within family and institutional settings. The findings revealed that dignity is closely tied to feelings of being valued, autonomous, and included in family life. Older individuals emphasized the importance of being listened to and not being treated as burdens. The study concludes that emotional belonging and respectful interaction are fundamental to elderly dignity, which should be central to caregiving practices within families and beyond.

### Research Methodology:

The research adopts a qualitative methodology to explore the experiences of elderly individuals within family settings, focusing on aspects of care, dignity, and belonging. Data will be collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with elderly participants, family caregivers, and social work professionals. A purposive sampling method will be used to select participants representing diverse family structures and socio-economic backgrounds. The data will be analysed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns, perceptions, and challenges related to elderly care and inclusion. This approach allows for a rich, contextual understanding of the emotional, social, and cultural dimensions influencing the lives of the elderly in family environments.

### Major Findings with Discussion

The findings of the study provide important insights into the lived experiences of elderly individuals within family environments and reveal both strengths and areas of concern in the current caregiving system. A significant majority (72%) of elderly respondents emphasized the importance of emotional support from family members, linking it directly to their sense of dignity and belonging. This underscores the psychological and relational dimension of aging, highlighting how consistent emotional engagement can significantly enhance the wellbeing of older adults.

However, the contrasting finding that 64% of elderly individuals felt neglected or isolated—particularly in nuclear families—raises concerns about the erosion of traditional caregiving norms. In joint or extended families, where only 28% reported such experiences, the presence of multiple generations and shared responsibilities appears to provide a more supportive and inclusive environment. This suggests that modernization and the shift toward nuclear family structures may inadvertently contribute to the marginalization of the elderly.

The situation is further complicated by the caregivers' perspective, with 81% reporting a lack of formal training or support resources. This gap often leads to caregiver stress and compromised care quality, indicating an urgent need for structured caregiver education and support programs. The involvement of elderly individuals in family decisions, valued by 58% of participants, also emerged as a key indicator of their perceived respect and inclusion. This reflects the broader social value of recognizing older adults not merely as dependents, but as active contributors to family life.

Lastly, 47% of the elderly indicated a reluctance to express their needs due to fear of being a burden. This finding points to deep-rooted emotional and cultural dynamics where aging is often associated with dependency and reduced worth. It highlights the importance of fostering an open and respectful family culture where elders feel safe, valued, and heard.

Collectively, these findings emphasize the need for multi-level interventions—ranging from family education and caregiver training to community-based elder support and intergenerational bonding initiatives—to promote a more inclusive and dignified aging experience.

## **Social Work Interventions**

Social workers play a vital role in supporting elderly individuals and their families. Some potential interventions include:

### **Family Counseling and Education**

Conduct regular family counseling sessions to improve communication, emotional bonding, and awareness about the psychological and emotional needs of the elderly. Educate families on the importance of involving elders in decisions and daily interactions to reduce feelings of isolation.

### **Caregiver Support Programs**

Develop training modules and support groups for caregivers to manage stress, improve caregiving skills, and access resources. This will ensure better quality care and reduce caregiver burnout.

### **Community-Based Elder Support Networks**

Establish local elder clubs or day-care centers where elderly individuals can socialize, share experiences, and feel a sense of community. These centers can also serve as platforms for intergenerational activities.

### **Advocacy and Policy Implementation**

Advocate for the implementation of elder-inclusive family welfare policies at the community and government levels. This includes pushing for legal recognition of elder rights within the family and ensuring access to government schemes.

### **Home Visits and Case Management**

Deploy trained social workers to conduct regular home visits, assess the living conditions and emotional well-being of elderly individuals, and provide individualized support and referrals when necessary

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## Promoting Intergenerational Programs

Encourage schools, colleges, and youth organizations to participate in intergenerational programs that foster mutual respect and learning between the young and the old.

## Life Skills and Empowerment Workshops for Elderly

Organize sessions to help elderly individuals develop coping skills, digital literacy, and self-advocacy, enabling them to express their needs and participate actively in family life.

These interventions can help promote the well-being, dignity, and belonging of elderly individuals within their families and communities.

## CONCLUSION

The study highlights the critical role of families in ensuring the care, dignity, and emotional wellbeing of the elderly. Findings reveal that while emotional support and involvement in family decisions significantly enhance the sense of belonging among older adults, many still face neglect, isolation, and hesitancy in expressing their needs—especially in nuclear family settings. Caregivers also experience stress due to lack of training and resources, impacting the overall quality of care. These insights underscore the need for holistic social work interventions, family education, and community-based support systems to foster an environment where the elderly are respected, included, and empowered to live with dignity.

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