

Breaking Barriers: The Struggles and Triumphs of Elderly Women in Pursuing their Passion

Dr. Sana Hashmi

Assistant Professor, Al-Barkaat College of Graduate Studies, Aligarh, U. P., India

Email: hashmisana2[at]gmail.com

Abstract: *Reality shows and movies, based on real-life stories have become a staple of television, with younger audiences favoring live reality shows over scripted dramas. These programs, which began as quiz shows in India, now include singing, dancing, and talent competitions aimed primarily at youth. However, elderly people are rarely featured in such shows. Satyamev Jayate is one of the few reality programs that highlighted the realities of Indian elderly people in its episode Sunset Years, Sunshine Life. The movie Saand Ki Aankh portrayed the empowerment of elderly women in their journey toward success. This study examines the challenges faced by elderly women to survive their life and to achieve success by pursue their passion.*

Keywords: Elderly People, Government Support, Television, Reality Show, Success Stories.

1. Introduction

In the era of cable and satellite, many lives have been affected by television. Television programmes (films, reality shows, daily soaps, etc.) are the most significant way of communicating because they target each and every section of society, whether people belong to a literate society or an illiterate society. Movies and other shows cover different spheres, i.e., the affairs of family and society, romance, religious stories, games, etc. Even some shows and movies depict real life incidents in our society. But mostly, these shows and movies targeted the young members of our society, while a limited number discussed the issues regarding elderly people.

There is an interesting TV reality show named 'Satyamav Jayate', shown on television, which not only focused on various sensitive social issues prevalent in India like female feticide, child sexual abuse, rape, honour killings, domestic violence, untouchability, and alcoholism but also covered the issues of old age and the criminalization of politics. This work is based on this TV reality show. The meaning of 'Satyamev Jayate' is 'Truth Alone Triumphs'. This show was aired on various channels within 'Star Network' along with 'Doordarshan's DD National.

The aim of this study is to highlight the great achievements of people that often go unnoticed in order to encourage the audience to achieve their goals no matter what comes in between. It also aims to empower citizens with information about their country and urge them to take action. In this study, only one episode of this show and one Bollywood movie, named 'Sunset Years, Sunshine Life' and 'Saand ki Aankh' respectively are discussed. These two television programmes portrayed the reality that elderly people are facing in their lives in Indian society and the reasons behind their vulnerability. This show not only covered one side of the lives of elderly people, but it also demonstrated the efforts of individuals, organisations, and even elderly people themselves to make their old age pleasing. After ending these programmes, it was

observed that it is not important how many years you live on this earth; the matter of concern is how you enjoy your life even after having difficulties in the later years of your lives.

2. Review of Literature

Vincent (2003), in his book *Old Age*, emphasizes the need to understand aging both personally and socially. He highlights that perceptions of old age vary across cultures, time periods, individuals, and genders, with women experiencing widowhood more often than men. The book discusses how society views the elderly, how they perceive themselves, and the role of government and NGOs in ensuring a secure old age. Vincent also explores concepts like sickness, death, and immortality, defining old age as the final stage of life before death.

Kumar and Chaudhary (2013) analyzed the global popularity of reality TV, highlighting its diverse formats, cost-effectiveness, and audience appeal, despite being largely scripted and profit-driven compared to traditional soap operas

Malur et al. (2014) highlighted reality TV's growing popularity, replacing traditional soaps. These shows generate revenue, provide talent exposure, and impact participants both positively and negatively, shaping modern entertainment trends.

Pahad et al. (2015) explored reality TV's impact, highlighting its role in breaking soap opera monotony. As a major communication medium, it influences youth and society both positively and negatively.

Objectives of the study

- To understand the problems of Indian elderly people and the reasons behind their vulnerability through both TV reality programmes.
- To aware society to the reality of elderly people in India.
- To highlight the successful stories of Indian elderly people.

Volume 14 Issue 3, March 2025

Fully Refereed | Open Access | Double Blind Peer Reviewed Journal

www.ijsr.net

3. Research Methodology

In this study, a descriptive research design has been used. This research design presents a picture of the specific details of a situation, social setting, or relationship. This study is based on secondary sources. Secondary data was collected from TV programmes, different books, articles, journals, conference papers, working papers, and various websites for a better understanding of the research and for the purpose of a literature review.

4. Results and Discussion of the Study

Analysis of ‘*Satyamev Jayate*’

The *Satyamev Jayate* episode “*Sunset Years, Sunshine Life*” highlights India’s unique tradition of respecting elders, where multiple generations live together and seek elders’ blessings. However, it questions whether all elders receive the respect they deserve.

Problems and Challenges of Elderly

Elderly individuals in India face diverse challenges that vary over time and between individuals. This episode highlights these issues through case studies, showcasing the difficulties experienced by the aging population in society.

Experiences Shared By Elderly People In Television Reality Show

Krishna Dawer, a 78-year-old from Delhi, raised her children alone after her husband’s death. Her son, pressuring her for property, locked her out of her own home. After nine hours on the streets, neighbors and police helped her regain entry. Heartbroken, she compared herself to a bird longing for its lost nest. Her story reflects the struggles faced by many elderly mothers in India.

Gahininath Bhosale and his wife struggled to raise their children, sacrificing everything for them. In old age, their children refused to provide even food or tea, leaving them impoverished and abandoned.

Ashok Panchal and his wife from Mumbai were disowned by their son, who threw out their belongings and refused them a home. When they reminded him of their sacrifices, he coldly dismissed it as their duty.

Mangala Khadilkar from Mumbai, despite fulfilling her children’s wishes, was forced into an old age home by her elder son. He refused her calls, leaving her heartbroken. Her story reflects the painful betrayal many parents face.

Experiences Shared by Different NGOs Members

These are a few of the initiatives launched by NGOs to help the elderly. These are discussed below:-

Winnie Singh’s NGO Maitri in Vrindavan supports abandoned widows, many of whom were left by their children after inheriting property. Some, seen as burdens, still long for their

families. Despite rare visits, they face neglect and insult, forcing them to return to the shelter heartbroken.

Mangesh Abhang, who works at an old-age home, shared that many elderly parents are abandoned by their children, even when they have multiple sons. Families argue over the monthly expenses of \$2,000–\$2,200, unwilling to bear even small extra costs. He recounted a heartbreaking story of a woman whose son, working at NASA, left her in the home for three years. She keeps her bags packed, waiting in vain for his return.

Ashok T. Devre Patil, who runs *Matoshree* old age home in Kalyan, shared heartbreaking stories of elderly parents abandoned by their children. Some were left at railway stations or hospitals under false pretenses, never to be picked up again. When these elderly individuals passed away, their children often refused to perform their last rites. Patil himself has conducted numerous funerals, highlighting the painful reality of elder neglect in a society known for revering its elders.

Parmila Krishnan investigated *Talaikoothal*, a shocking practice in Tamil Nadu where families intentionally kill elderly relatives, considering them burdens. Traditionally, it involved a ritual bath, but now, lethal injections by quacks are common. Widely accepted across social classes, families openly admit to these acts, prioritizing convenience over caring for their elders.

Reasons for Elderly People’s Vulnerability

Himanshu Rath, who runs *Agewell*, explains that elderly neglect often stems from life’s demands, leaving little time for caregiving. Additionally, many elderly individuals never planned for old age, making it difficult for families and society to support them adequately.

The economic challenges of aging in India are severe. With retirement at 60 and increasing life expectancy, financial security for 20–35 years is unrealistic due to inflation. As elderly parents age, their children also face financial burdens like retirement, loans, and weddings. To address this, the concept of retiring at 60 should be reconsidered, encouraging continued work and financial independence.

We cannot take insults from your own children. Love and respect affect all relationships, whether friendly or not. When they return, they hug me. It’s not a casual hug. She will draw me to herself. She will hold my hand, and she won’t let go. It is only for love that they thirst. It is only about acceptance. Actually, elderly people don’t want to be treated like untouchables. They don’t wish to be a burden to their families.

Elderly individuals must be vocal about mistreatment to prevent hardship. Property and finances should not be transferred until both spouses are alive, as respect often fades after inheritance. Parents should share love, not wealth.

Success Stories of Elderly People

Jayant Joshi’s first wife, knowing she had little time left, encouraged him to remarry. After her passing, his sons

supported the idea. At 79, he found a companion, remarried, and has lived happily for seven years.

Old age brings loneliness, especially after losing a partner. While remarriage is often opposed due to property concerns, Natubhai from Ahmedabad promotes live-in relationships for senior citizens as a solution. The Supreme Court has legalized live-in relationships, emphasizing companionship over isolation. Having someone to talk to and care for extends life and brings happiness, making social approval less relevant.

Shailesh Mishra from 'Silver Innings' believes life after 55 is a second childhood, not just a time for prayers and newspapers. He encourages seniors to embrace hobbies, stay active, and "rewire" rather than retire.

Narayan Mahajan, a 91-year-old from Pune, defied age by scaling a 3,500-foot peak and setting a record in the *Limca Book of Records*. He advises elders to stay tension-free, eat less, exercise, and laugh more.

Two grandmothers from Johdi, Uttar Pradesh, took up shooting at an old age, winning state and national medals. Their success inspired their granddaughters and changed societal views on elderly potential. After some time a movie was launched to cover the achievement of these elderly women. Here the discussion of this movie is available.

"*Saand Ki Aankh*" is a deeply inspiring film that resonates profoundly with elderly women, as it shown the true story of **Chandro and Prakashhi Tomar**—two grandmothers from a small village in Uttar Pradesh who defied age-old traditions to become renowned sharpshooters. From the perspective of an elderly woman, this film is not just about shooting; it is about breaking free from the shackles of societal expectations that have long confined women, especially older ones, to household duties and invisibility.

For decades, women like Chandro and Prakashhi have been conditioned to believe that their roles are limited to serving their families, raising children, and maintaining the home. The idea of picking up a gun and excelling in a sport dominated by men was unheard of, especially for women in their sixties. Yet, their unwavering determination to step outside their traditional roles and achieve something remarkable proves that age is never a limitation—only societal mindsets are.

The film beautifully captures the struggles elderly women face, from being dismissed due to their age to battling patriarchal restrictions that dictate what they can or cannot do. It showcases their courage in not only learning a new skill but excelling at it despite resistance from their own families and community. Their success in competitive shooting brings to light a crucial message: empowerment is not reserved for the young; it is for anyone who dares to dream and work toward it.

Watching *Saand Ki Aankh* from an elderly woman's perspective is both emotional and empowering. It serves as a reminder that life does not end after a certain age—it can, in

fact, begin anew. The film inspires older women to recognize their own potential, to step beyond imposed limitations, and to realize that their dreams and aspirations are just as valid as anyone else's. More importantly, it encourages a cultural shift, urging society to respect and support the ambitions of elderly women rather than confining them to outdated expectations. In the end, Chandro and Prakashhi Tomar's story is not just theirs—it belongs to every woman who refuses to let age define her capabilities.

5. Conclusion

We should never think that the elderly are our weakness. Instead, they are our pillars of strength. They have experience and knowledge, love and understanding, and zeal for life. They are our past, and they are also our future. As a society, we ought to give the elders the chance to shine even in old age. We must help and encourage them. Old age does not mean that your life is over. Instead, a new chapter and a new part of your life have begun. Those hands that helped us as we took our first steps, whose hands fed us our first morsels when we held hands in ours, in the callouses we see on those, we should not read their future. Instead, think about what our future is to be. Only when those hands bless us will we see a bright future.

References

- [1] Agewell Foundation. (2011). 'Human Rights of Older People in India: A reality Check'. In Special Consultive Status with the ECOSOC at UN since 2011. July. (www.agewellfoundation.org).
- [2] Alam, Moneer. (2006). *Ageing in India: Socio-Economic and Health Dimensions*. New Delhi: Academic Foundation.
- [3] Chakraborti, R. D. (2004). *The Greying of India: Popultaion Ageing in the Context of Asia*. New Delhi: Sage Publication.
- [4] Chakraborty, P. (2009). *Sunset Years of Life: A Multidisciplinary Study of Rural Elderly*. Kolkata: Urbee Prakashan.
- [5] Chopra, S. & Pudussery, J. (2014). 'Social Security Pensions in India: An Assessment'. In *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol-49, Issue-19, 10 May.
- [6] Gopal, M. (2006). 'Ageing and Social Security'. In *Economic and Political Weekly*. Vol-41, No-42, October 21-27.
- [7] Kulkarni, S. (2017). 'Hand-Holding the Elderly'. In *Yojana*, (Special Issue), July, ISSN, 0971-8400.
- [8] Kumar, S and S. Chaudhry. (2013). 'Indian Reality TV Shows: An Empirical Study on Perception'. In *Sruti Management Review*. Vol -VI, Issue - I, Jan.-2013. Pp. 31-35.
- [9] Pahad, A., N. Karkare and M. Bhatt. (2015). 'Influence of Reality Television Shows on Society'. In *Indian Journal of Applied Research*. Vol- 5, Issue-4. Pp. 703-705. ISSN-2249-555X.
- [10] Sharma, A. and S. Agarwal. (2015). 'Impact of Reality Shows on Adolescent Perception'. In *International Journal of Scientific Journal*. Pp. 606-608.

- [11] Shelter, S. C. (2013). 'Problems of Aged in Changing Indian Scenario'. In Yojana Archives.
- [12] Valdivia, A. N. (Ed.). (2004). A Companion to Media Studies. New Delhi: Atlantic Publisher. Vincent, J. (2003). Old Age. London: Routledge.