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**Legal Framework Regulating the Old Age Homes: An Analysis of Challenges faced by Elderly for Legislative Reforms in Pakistan**

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**Abstract**

The research evaluates older nursing home residents' difficulties and evaluates the institutional and social regulations that monitor Pakistani nursing facilities. Research demonstrates that elder neglect as well as abuse expands in frequency while urbanization and modernization and changing cultural values make these problems worse. Research findings show elderly people who remain outside institutions achieve higher levels of life satisfaction compared to those living in institutions thus demonstrating the crucial role of maintaining social networks with their communities. Research emphasizes the requirement to pass new legislation because present laws have significant gaps that threaten the safety of senior citizens. The research methodology consisted of qualitative methods to detect major issues that include financial dependence and psychological strains and instances of family desertion. The author supports two changes in policy to enhance elderly care which involve implementing required family visitation programs in combination with improved senior care centers. The study proves social consciousness elevation along with new legal protection structures that safeguard elderly people must be established with punishment systems for their abandonment and mistreatment. The research develops essential components for a complete policy system that enhances the life quality of senior citizens while safeguarding their dignity and welfare in the current fast-changing social environment.

**Keywords:** Elderly, Legislative Framework, Population, Old Age Homes, Shelters

**Introduction**

Aging normally happens in everybody's life cycle, yet Pakistan's elderly people struggle because of social development alongside deficient support networks. Pakistani society in the past supported its elderly members through extended family systems which respected their knowledge and valued their importance to family life. Traditional support networks that used to connect older adults have disappeared with the pace of modernization since cultural values altered and urban growth occurred rapidly. This has left older adults feeling isolated and vulnerable. Nursing homes admission of older individuals has become more common due to the growth of nuclear families and the younger generation's employment relocation and increased responsibility of caregiving. The accommodation facilities of these institutions lack support for complete senior care needs which require attention to their physical wellbeing and emotional health and social connections (Zakir et al., 2022). The scarceness of law enforcement alongside social awareness about these issues intensifies the problems which elderly people face making them vulnerable to physical abuse and psychological damage and financial abuse (Zakir & Nizam-u-din Bareach, n.d.).

The research investigates the problems which nursing home residents in Pakistan encounter when analyzing shortcomings in their existing protective law frameworks and social support structures. The study promotes the urgent need for broad legislation reform with enhanced nationwide recognition for securing the rights and dignity of senior citizens. The evaluation of nursing homes and government and nongovernmental participation alongside cultural elements leading to elderly mistreatment will produce functional solutions to enhance elderly life quality in Pakistan. The research confirms older citizens experience serious social and humanitarian problems requiring immediate action and structural changes.

In traditional joint family structures of Pakistan older people enjoyed value because they fulfilled essential social roles in family interactions. Modernization and urbanization together with cultural value shifts have wiped out traditional care systems through which elderly people used to receive support thus leaving most of these older adults exposed and alone (Zakir & Nizam-u-din Breach, n.d.). The growth of nuclear family structures along with youth work migration has created a strong dependency on nursing home care but these institutions insufficiently address senior patients' physical and emotional and social requirements. The literature review assesses older Pakistani individuals' problems and investigates the suitability of present care structures (Zakir et al., 2021). The population of elderly people in Pakistan is set to rapidly grow and surpass 4% today to reach 7% by 2045 and 40 million by 2050. Despite rapid population growth of elderly people, the Pakistani country lacks enough social programs and healthcare infrastructure to satisfy their needs. Since legal protection is inadequate their situation becomes worse because they become vulnerable to mistreatment including financial exploitation and abuse as well as neglect (Zakir et al., 2022). Survey results show that abuse affects 4% to 6% of elderly individuals. Additional protection measures need to exist especially in institutions where elderly people are under increased risk because they need others for daily care.

The present system of elderly care in Pakistan operates without coordination thus failing to provide adequate service. The Edhi Old Age Home operates as a shelter center but many nursing homes lack even fundamental necessities. The literature highlights the critical need for substantial legal reforms to secure the safety of older people. Steps to safeguard their dignity and well-being include strengthening legislation, increasing enforcement, and boosting social awareness through community involvement. These measures include appropriate healthcare, diet, and recreational activities (Zakir et al., 2021). Government-run institutions in major cities such as Karachi, Lahore, and Quetta routinely experience financial and manpower shortages.

## **Methodology**

The research employed qualitative methodology. The qualitative approach that combines the collection of case studies, primary and secondary data, interviews and legal analysis. This approach provided a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by older people in nursing homes in Pakistan and provide recommendations to improve their care and protection.

Primary data was collected through structured questionnaires distributed to council members and officials. These questionnaires focused on current nursing home statutes and their effectiveness. This method allowed researchers to obtain direct information about the operational and legal aspects of these institutions. While secondary data was collected from various materials including books, news articles, internet resources, and research articles. This provided a broad understanding of the topic and informed the research with existing knowledge. For case studies Specific cases, such as Fahmida's experience in a nursing home, were to provide detailed information about the challenges faced by older people. Interviews were also conducted with staff and elderly residents to collect qualitative data about their perceptions and experiences.

The methodology included a legal analysis component, where the study compared existing laws in Pakistan with other countries, such as the United States. This helped identify gaps in the legal framework governing nursing homes and informed recommendations for legislative reforms. The study also used basic quantitative methods to present demographic data and investigate relationships between the variables. The analysis was based on a comprehensive review of existing literature and legal frameworks, to ensure robust and comprehensive methodology to understand the challenges faced by older people in nursing homes in Pakistan.

The research on the challenges faced by older people in nursing homes in Pakistan employed qualitative research methodology to analyze the data collected. The data analysis techniques used are detailed below:

### **Findings of the Research**

The research used various approaches that included interviews and case studies together with legal examination methods. This research discovers essential reasons why Pakistan must focus on resolving the difficulties that older people encounter. The rise of elderly people coupled with insufficient care services and insufficient legal safeguards creates obstacles for promoting older people's well-being and preserving their dignity. The study promotes effective legislation as a necessary element alongside heightened social consciousness and community participation to handle these matters.

#### **Prevalence of Elder Abuse and Neglect**

Research shows abuse of elderly people is widespread in Pakistan since studies confirm that 4% to 6% of older adults face physical abuse and psychological mistreatment and financial exploitation.

Neglect that affects elderly individuals in nursing homes persists because seniors often do not have reliable access to essential needs including food and medical care and other necessities.

**Impact of Urbanization and Modernization:** The rapid process of urbanization alongside modernization has destroyed traditional support networks which expose older people to increased personal risks.

The combination of nuclear family structure and younger people relocating for work opportunities together with increasing family care responsibilities has triggered the increased admissions of older adults into nursing homes.

#### **Inadequacy of Existing Care Systems**

Current elderly care frameworks within Pakistan operate without sufficient integration between them. The management of nursing homes in Pakistan occurs through a combination of governmental operations with private sectors and non-governmental organization (NGO) leadership. Inadequate nutrition alongside insufficient healthcare services together with insufficient recreational opportunities at nursing homes create unacceptable life conditions for residents.

#### **Legal and Legislative Gaps**

The study shows the necessity to create complete legal changes that will fix problems that older people encounter in Pakistan. The existing laws which control nursing homes fail to meet present standards and authorities do not effectively enforce established regulatory measures. The research finds that older people require legislative policies which will protect them from abuse and neglect alongside measures that promote their dignity and well-being.

### **Demographic and socioeconomic challenges**

The population of elderly persons in Pakistan is quickly expanding through current demographic projections which show 4% of older adults today will grow to 7% by 2045. Three major obstacles

affect elderly adults in their social circumstances: economic dependency along with psychological stress and family abandonment.

**People require enhanced social knowledge together with active community involvement.**

The research demonstrates why it is crucial to boost public understanding regarding elder citizen difficulties and how family and community acceptance aid their welfare. The researchers call for necessary policy changes that should include regular visitation policies for family members and enhanced senior care facilities. Older adults in nursing institutions develop depression and anxiety symptoms because isolation and neglect cause their mental health to deteriorate. Older people experience high rates of hypertension along with diabetes and arthritis as physical health issues.

**Role of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)**

Although Non-Governmental Organizations participate extensively in providing homeless shelters to older people their activities remain constrained due to funding obstacles alongside insufficient government backing. A complete policy framework needs development to enhance older people's life quality while securing their dignity and well-being during modern social transformations.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

Elder abuse and neglect in Pakistan constitute a major social problem which becomes worse because of inadequate care systems and urbanization and modernization trends. Research indicates that about 4% to 6% of elderly people in Pakistan become victims of abuse yet institutionalized seniors remain especially at risk because they need continuous care (Khan & Ali, 2020). Due to the loss of traditional joint family structures elderly people experience greater social separation while being marginalized within society (Zafar & Hussain, 2021). Old-age homes have grown more prevalent because of the rise of nuclear families combined with youth employment migration (Rashid 2022). Government and NGO efforts have failed to deliver basic healthcare services in addition to proper nutrition and recreational facilities at these institutions where poor living standards prevail (Hameed & Raza, 2020). A lack of adequate laws exposes elderly people to mistreatment because current statutes either lack effectiveness or are not properly executed (Siddiqui, 2018). Elderly welfare improvement demands both stronger legal safeguards with mandatory family participation in elderly care. Non-government organizations give essential shelter and care to seniors while facing limitations from their available resources according to Malik and Tariq (2019). Government financial backing combined with increased support would help improve the quality standards of their offered services.

Public education regarding senior citizen matters must increase while running awareness campaigns to develop family involvement and community accessibility (Aslam, 2021). The creation of day-care centers combined with recreational facilities enables improvements to senior citizens' life quality. Healthcare professionals should receive training to detect and handle signs of abuse and neglect among elderly patients because depression, anxiety and hypertension and arthritis commonly affect this population (Farooq et al., 2020). A solution requires multiple components to resolve these problems. The well-being and dignity of older people in Pakistan requires three core components including strengthened legal protection together with better social awareness and increased community involvement. Modern caregiving facilities and nursing homes need to be developed because the traditional family institution has deteriorated which leaves senior citizens exposed to risks. The protection of elderly individuals depends on complete legal reform and better healthcare systems and reinforced supportive family structures. Pakistan needs to establish these procedures so the country can develop a society which honors and defends elderly persons within their community and enables their full quality living experience.

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