A Study on Geriatric Care: With Reference to India and Japan

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Abstract—India's rapidly aging population is creating a growing demand for geriatric care. Geriatrics is a specialized branch of medicine that focuses on the healthcare needs of older adults where as Japan is also offering Healthcare Services without any restrictions to its citizens and also to people living there for more than 3 months. Both countries government has taken initiatives to increase geriatic care awareness among people. This paper explores the scope of geriatric care and also includes initiatives taken by Indian government and Japan government for the same. It includes purely a secondary research where data is collected from various websites.

Keywords: *Geriatic care, UHC, senior citizens, Demographic, Aging*

Introduction

India's rapidly aging population is creating a growing demand for geriatric care. Geriatrics is a specialized branch of medicine that focuses on the healthcare needs of older adults. Geriatricians are trained to assess and manage the complex medical, psychological, and social issues that often accompany aging. India's population is aging rapidly. By 2050, India is projected to have the largest elderly population in the world, with over 324 million people over the age of 60. This demographic shift is putting a strain on India's healthcare system, which is not well-equipped to meet the needs of older adults.

There are several factors that contribute to the increasing need for geriatric care in India.

- **Increased longevity**: Indians are living longer than ever before. In 1951, the average life expectancy in India was 37 years. By 2022, it had increased to 70 years.

- **Changes in lifestyle**: The modern Indian lifestyle, with its emphasis on processed foods and sedentary activities, is contributing to an increase in chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and cancer. These conditions are more common in older adults and require specialized care.

- **Social changes:** The traditional Indian family structure, which often provided care for older adults, is breaking down. This is leaving many older adults without adequate support.

The Scope of Geriatric Care in India

- **Preventive care:** Geriatricians can help older adults prevent chronic diseases through screenings, vaccinations, and lifestyle counseling.

- **Diagnosis and management of chronic diseases:** Geriatricians are experts in the diagnosis and management of chronic diseases that are common in older adults, such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and cancer.

- **Mental health care:** Geriatricians can provide mental health care for older adults who are struggling with depression, anxiety, or other mental health conditions.

- **Rehabilitation:** Geriatricians can help older adults who have lost mobility or function due to illness or injury regain their independence through rehabilitation services.

- **Palliative care**: Geriatricians can provide palliative care to older adults who are terminally ill.

The Challenges of Geriatric Care in India

- **Shortage of geriatric specialists**: There is a shortage of geriatric specialists in India. This is due in part to the fact that geriatrics is a relatively new specialty in India.

- **Lack of awareness**: Many older adults in India are not aware of the benefits of geriatric care. This is due in part to a lack of education and awareness about geriatric care.

- **Accessibility:** Geriatric care services are often not accessible to older adults in rural areas.

The Future of Geriatric Care in India

The future of geriatric care in India is bright. The Indian government is increasingly recognizing the importance of geriatric care and is investing in the development of geriatric care services. There is also a growing awareness of geriatric care among older adults and their families.

As India's population continues to age, geriatric care will become increasingly important. Geriatric care can help older adults live longer, healthier, and more independent lives.

Geriatric Healthcare in Japan

Japan is offering Healthcare Services without any restrictions to its citizens and also to people living there for more than 3 months. Fee for their care is decided on the basis of their income level. Good technological support is the added advantage. Japan government has also taken initiatives to increase number of schools with a focus on rural area so that number of doctors should also rise. Another reason for better services in Japan is Universal Health Coverage i.e. UHC for making Japan world's highest in life expectancy. Other nations can also take Japan as a model for improving life expectancy.

Elder Population in Total Population in India

2011	8.6%
2036	Expected 12.5%
2050	Expected 19.5%

Above data indicates that care for elder population is the significant requirement of the economy as with the passage of time, ratio of elderly in the total population is also rising.

Issues Associated with Elderly People

- In this digital economy, it is difficult to train elder people as per the tech requirements this is majorly a challenges with elderly living in unorganized sector.

- In small countries, it is not an issues to deal with elderly as communities play an active role then it's a challenge in countries like India, there is a requirement to build the type of community to be associated with elders.

- Building an ecosystem in the country that should be elderly favourable.

Initiatives Taken by Indian Government for Elder People

- **Senior Care Aging Growth Engine**: The Indian government is also working to promote senior care as an aging growth engine. This involves developing new industries and services that cater to the needs of the elderly population the government is promoting the development of senior citizen homes, assisted living facilities, and home healthcare services. Government is also working to create an age-friendly society by making public spaces and buildings more accessible to the elderly. For example, the government has mandated that all new buildings have ramps and elevators for the elderly.

- **Elder Line**: Elder Line is a valuable resource for senior citizens and their caregivers in India. It provides a confidential and supportive space for them to raise their concerns and get help. Referral to other relevant services, such as legal aid, medical care, and social support.

- **PM Vaya Vandana Yojna**: The PMVVY provides a regular income to the policyholder for a period of 10 years. This can help senior citizens to meet their monthly expenses and maintain a comfortable lifestyle. senior citizens can purchase a pension plan by paying a lump sum amount. The guaranteed rate of return on the pension is currently 7.40% per annum.

- **Vayoshrestha Samman:** Vayoshrestha Samman is a national award instituted by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in 2005 to recognize eminent senior citizens and institutions for their outstanding services to the elderly, especially indigent senior citizens. Indian government to recognize the contributions of senior citizens to society and to raise awareness about the needs of the elderly.

- **Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana:** assisted living devices such as Walking Sticks, Elbow Crutches, Walkers/ Crutches, Tripods/ Quadpods, Hearing Aids, Wheelchairs, Artificial Dentures and Spectacles are provided free of cost to the beneficiary senior citizens. The scheme helps to improve the mobility, independence, and quality of life of senior citizens.

- **Sacred Portal:** A web portal that provides information and resources on various aspects of aging, such as health, finance, and legal rights.

- **Silver Economy:** Silver Economy is a term used to describe the economic activity generated by and for people aged 60 and over. It is a rapidly growing sector, as the global population ages. The government is also supporting senior citizens to start their own businesses. For example, the National Institute of Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIESBUD) offers special training programs for senior entrepreneurs.

- **Start Ups: Emoha** is a tech-enabled caregiving platform that provides a range of services to senior citizens, including remote health monitoring, emergency response, and companionship. **Khyaal** is a start-up that provides a range of home care services to senior citizens, including personal care, meal preparation, and medication management.

Old Age Care Division of NISD

Course	Duration	Purpose
PG Diploma in Integrated Geriatric Care	1 Year	To develop professional at Manager Level and Supervisory Level
Certificate Course on Geriatric Care Givers	3 Months	To develop professionals for bed assistance
Capacity Building Programme on Dementia Care & Management	3 Days	For functionary of Old Age Homes
Awareness Programme for Promoting Inter Generational Bonding	1 Day	Sensitization on Elderly Problem
Diet & Nutrition: Holistic Health Care		Training to Family Members of Senior Citizens.

In addition to above courses, State level/National Level Conferences or Seminars are also initiated by NISD in collaboration with State/Central Universities.

Conclusion

As we are moving in the scenario where as per the data, we will have increasing number of elderly people in the economy. We need holistic approach for them. Geriatric care should not be confined to health aspect whereas focus should be on overall improvement of quality of life. It may be training them for "How to earn livelihood" as per their strength or how to take care of themselves when no one is around. Japan is setting a good example and nations can take it as a model for finding scope of improvement in enhancing their economy's efficiency.

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