

'Elderly parents are abandoned by their sons in Kumbh Mela'

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Dabolim: As if banishing elderly parents to old-age homes was not enough, now the sons of these hapless parents are finding newer methods of getting rid of their filial responsibilities like abandoning them at religious mass congregations like Kumbh Mela, revealed Helpage India chief executive

GT EXCLUSIVE

officer (CEO) Mathew Cherian here on Wednesday.

"Such is the craving for male child that people resort to female foeticide. But actually it is the sons who actually behave irresponsibly and shy away from their responsibilities. We have found cases where elderly parents have been found abandoned in religious mass congregations like the Kumbh Mela," Cherian told GT.

Speaking on the sidelines of maiden 'NirmaanTalks' organised by Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS) Pilani, Goa campus, the head



Students of BITS Pilani Goa Campus and senior citizens listen to the speakers during the NirmaanTalks held in the institute on Wednesday. *Pics: Arish Naik*

of Helpage India said that the wails of abandoned parents reverberating from the loudspeakers go unheard.

"It is a disheartening site where wailing parents cry out for their sons to take them home, but in vain. Sons of such abandoned parents justify their act saying that it was their wish to spend their last moments of life at

pious places like the banks of river Ganga in Varanasi. This is a good way for these offsprings to wash off their hands from their responsibilities," he said.

'NirmaanTalks' is a platform set up by BITS Pilani to bring out the stories of the unsung heroes, the small good deeds and showcase them to the

outside world and inspire the student community and people in general to start working for the betterment of society.

Echoing similar sentiments, Ramon Magsaysay awardee and from Founder of Delhi based NGO Goonj, Anshu Gupta said that the senior citizens face a lot of hardships, especially following a calamity.

"Elderly are unattended as they are unable to stand in queues or jostle with the crowd to snatch their share of relief material like food, water and blankets," Gupta said.

According to equal rights activist Harish Iyer, along with the elderly, people from marginalised community too face lot of discrimination. This includes the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) community.

"The Section 377 treated same gender sex as a crime. Lot of heinous crime has been committed against the LGBT community. Ironically, while this law was made in colonial India, the British have accepted changes in society like same sex marriage," Iyer said.

WHAT THEY SAY

Elderly parents have been found abandoned in religious mass congregations like the Kumbh Mela.

Mathew Cherian,
CEO Helpage India



Senior citizens face abject hardships during disaster relief operations.

Anshu Gupta,
Ramon Magsaysay
awardee and Founder of Goonj

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Harish Iyer

