

## **CASE STUDIES**

As the life cycle progresses and old age approaches, it is important to understand changes in the lives of the ageing. It looks into how older people live and carry on with their day-to-day existence. Below few case studies are presented to provide a balanced view of ageing, emphasizing both the strengths and abilities as well as the difficulties that confronts the old.

### **1 Valuing Work - A widower but a diligent worker**

Mr Sebastiao Fernandes has been living in the Monastery of Pilar, Goa for the last 50 years, but he feels that this is not his home. He is 70 years old. He hails from Batim village, Goa but lives in Pilar Monastery because of his dedicated work as a cook. He feels good that he had this job for so many years. It's been good for the employers too, as he have looked after them well. But in spite of everything it is a fact that He feels that he is a paid employee, without retirement benefits and because of old age he will be without work. His wife died long ago. He has two daughters. Both the daughters are married and staying in the same place. He has divided his property for both his daughters. Till date he is working as a cook for the priest's community in the Pilar Monastery. He starts his day at 6 a.m in the Kitchen. After preparing breakfast for the community, he attends Mass in the chapel. Then his routine life starts. The free time that he gets, he utilizes it for kitchen garden, on small poultry and rabbitry. For him life is like a candle and he wants to make it burn as brightly as possible. He always keeps himself busy even at the age of seventy. Sometimes he thinks about his future. Nevertheless, he is a

great example for youngsters. He agrees that idleness is devils workshop. Therefore, he prays to God everyday not to allow him to slow down.

2. **Life Carries On Happily - A Retired nurse, pensioner and housewife contented with her family**

Old age is the most wonderful time of life. It is a time to move ahead with happy memories. It is a phase in one's life when one gives to others as much as one wants to. When she crossed 60, she looked at herself and asked as how many more years of life she would have. She counted her remaining years as 40 and felt that she is now a mature tree who has to give its fruits to others. I am one of the few lucky persons, who have no problems – health wise or emotional at this time of her life. She has two children – a daughter and a son. Her daughter is a teacher and happily married. Her son became a priest. She has a good relationship with her husband. It's been a smooth sailing, so far and she expects things to continue that way. After retirement, she continued her profession of nursing serving the people of her village. She was helping the old priests in one clergy home. She said by doing service, she derived a lot of joy and meaning to her life. She spends a lot of time in community prayer and draws strength for her life. She says that she is very contented with her life and could not have asked for more from God.

3. **Life A Struggle – A Widow, living with her son**

Mrs Gracinda Da Costa is 74 years old. She comes from Curtorim, Goa. She has one son and four daughters. At present she is living with her son. She not only does her personal work herself but also helps out with other chores in the house. She feels that there is respect for the elders. She pays more attention to her

religious duties now and spends more time in prayer. She also spends time watching the TV, reading the newspaper, does shopping and visiting the church. She does not suffer from any major illness. All her daughters are well settled and happily married. She feels proud for that as she feels that was her responsibility as a mother. She has a good rapport with her neighbours. Her children keep a contact with, when time permits visit her. She says that there are different stages in life and one must take each in its stride. She has always dealt with life as it comes. She says that now she enjoys the company of her grandchildren but they are not substitute for companionship, which she shared with her husband. Her husband passed away 12 years ago but she managed to cope in the right spirit. She says that life has to be faced no matter what the circumstances.

4. **Life A Celebration - A housewife contented with her family and looks forward to a satisfying fulfilling life in later years.**

Mrs Philomena Lobo is 71 years old. She says that she feels God has been kind to her, given her a lot and she must make the most of it. She has always tried to become content with her life. She has a good relationship with her husband. She says that her husband is very considerate person, good hearted and has allowed her to do whatever she wanted to do. She had a smooth sailing, so far and expects to continue that way. She has two children, both daughters and married. One is her neighbor and the other works abroad. Their children are in constant touch with them. She enjoys domestic chores. She keeps herself busy. She keeps her house clean and everything is well organized. She along with her husband is members of different associations and also sings for choirs since she feels that these

involvements gives meaning to their lives. She enjoys good health, minor problems erupt, but they come and go. She says that it's the attitude to things and life that count. As you age, there is going to be some wear and tear of organs, but so far one does not let them affect your spirits. Both of them do some charity works, and fond of reading and watching TV. She feels that she really do not know how her day ends, there is always so much to do and be involved with. She is very contented with her life and remarks that she could not have asked for more from God.

5 **Holding the Fort - Retired but contented with his family, enjoys being the patriarchal head.**

Fernando Menezes is 75 years old. He belongs to a very respectable family in his village. Her wife is alive and has only one son. He is a medical practitioner and ended his job as a medical superintendent. He keeps himself busy. He continues his clinic at home, visits once in a week to an elderly priest home at Pilar and gives his services. Besides, he takes care of his ancestral home and properties. He has a special interest to watch football matches which is held in Goa or in Europe. His family respects him as well as his decisions. The family do not take any decision without consulting him. He enjoys good health and for that he is thankful to God. His wife is very loving and very supportive. He feels that managing his house is his responsibility and nobody else should be burdened with it. For him, old age is a blessing. He says that life is worth living, one must make the most of it.

6. **Living For Others – A retired teacher and still an active social worker.**

Mr Agnel Crasto is 74 years old. He says that as long as you are active, you are not old. We are old only when we cannot work. He firmly believes in active ageing. That's why he keeps himself busy. Besides, looking after his grandchildren, he gives classes in personality development, conducts training in public speaking and music. He organizes and trains senior citizens choir. He was a teacher and also public notary. He strongly feels that he is wanted by his family and society and that they appreciate his services. He has a happy married life. Not only his wife was caring and loving, she provided him with all the comforts too. He has four children and they shared a warm relationship with him. They enjoyed the company of their father. The children practically every day are in touch with him either by visits or on phones. Fortunately for him all the transitions in his life have been smooth as he had a very understanding family. He firmly believes in this dictum that God helps those who help themselves.

7. **Lonely Existence – A married man, pensioner but feeling depressed**

Mr Apeles Lobo is 70 years old. He has three children, one daughter and two sons, all settled in London. They visit them from time to time. Since they need to be with all three children, every trip lasts 3-4 months. It was exciting at the beginning but becomes a little boring gradually, as all of them go out and they remained confined at home. But once they are back to Goa they feel lonely and try to keep occupied with some activities. Although proud of their children, he mourns their absence. He says that they raised children so that when they grow old, their children would serve them. There is certain anguish in them as they

really do not know what they will do after one of them is gone. They say that socially in the society, it is a matter of pride to be NRI parents but the euphoria is lost with the passage of time when both age and loneliness catch up. Now we are deciding to move into old aged home since we can live a life of dignity. They can afford to pay because he receives pension.

8. **Institutional living – Retired teacher, spinster living in old age home.**

M/s Alba Alvares is 90 years old. She is a spinster. She was a teacher and after her retirement she herself moved in an old aged home at Nuvem, Goa, since there was no other choice. She did not want to live with any relative. She is satisfied since everything is provided in time. Moreover, there is time for prayer which she enjoys. Adequate medical help is provided when needed. She enjoys a good relationship with others but she feels there are some who are unpleasant – they quarrel over small things. She often wonders as why they quarrel, since they are all old – not many years to live. Nevertheless, she keeps herself busy. On the whole she enjoys good health. Even in this home she gives free tuitions for the students of that vicinity and also teaches embroidery for girls. She pays for her stay at old aged home. She reads a lot – fond of books and magazines. They come together occasionally. There are religious functions when we share with each other. Most of them have different interests and energy. They like to do different things. We eat together but do not share much.

9 **Empty Nest – A widow, teacher, resigned to her fate**

Mrs Drucilla Velho is 65 years old. She says that old age is a time when we live our life the way we want to, provided the children are well settled and one is in

good health in all aspects. Fortunately she says that she has been lucky and has a comfortable old age. Her husband died 12 years ago. She has 3 children, 2 sons and one daughter. All children have been settled and happily married leading their own life. She was in teaching profession, continued to teach K.G in a private school. Her two sons with their children are settled abroad. She has a big house but empty. She feels the absence of their children, hence she keeps herself busy. Her children who are abroad ring her once a week, gives her whatever she needs but still she feels lonely. She maintains herself and does the expenses of the house by her own income. Whenever I require more her children come to her aid. Her daughter is married in the town. She comes and meets her and renders help whenever necessary. She spends time in prayer, watches TV, attends social parties etc. and thus keeps herself busy. Having crossed sixty, what is referred to as old age, the thoughts about age related diseases and disability frequently crosses her mind. This is what I fear now in life. But I trust God and carry on my life.

10 **Life Carries On Happily And In Service – widower, contended with his life, enjoys doing work.**

Mr Sebastiao Vaz is 90 years old. He works at a Retreat Centre at Pilar. Lovingly people call him ‘uncle’. He believes in service and so he is still working at the retreat Centre taking care of people who come for retreats, seminars and on pilgrimage. He has two children, both girls. Both of them settled and happily married. This retreat Centre has become for him his second home. He has spent 30 years of his life in this Centre with dedicated service. His smile on his face motivates others to do the same. He has started his work on the ship but after the

death of his wife he settled down in Goa to take care of his two daughters. He did this job responsibly. He is a person of deep faith. After doing his daily chores, he will take some time to clean the surroundings. He does this with love even today. In his free time, he reads and updates himself. He enjoys dramas. Through his work, he becomes an example for others especially for the young. He enjoys this phase of his life as much as earlier ones. He says that he needs to cope with routine problems but he considers it as part of his life and is not worried. He says that he carries out his usual activities and is happy that he can afford to enjoy a relaxed pace. I feel contented and peaceful in these surroundings.