

## CYBER MARRIAGES/ REMARRIAGES FOR SENIOR CITIZENS THROUGH WORLD WIDE WEB – AN EXPERIMENT

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**Abstract.** Senior citizens want a companion in the later life for social, emotional and physical support. The most-cited reason for remarriage in later life by both men and women is companionship. One of the greatest obstacles older couples face in remarriage, however, is the negative attitudes and dissuasion of friends and family. About one of four elderly did not marry because of negative social pressure particularly from their adult children. To break this social stereotypes and stigma the project of designing a web portal was undertaken. The web portal 2nd innings in is designed and launched exclusively for seniors to search their companion in their later life. Those interested in getting married can upload their brief details on the website and also search the partners on it through the database. Success stories of those married in later years can be seen in the site.

The web portal right now has 127 registration after its launch which shows that seniors are interested in getting married/ remarried in third age of their life. Web as a medium is found convenient to most of them for uploading and searching companion/ life partner for marriage. Through this project it has been observed that the web portal proved to be helpful medium for finding a life partner to share feelings and happiness and that to senior citizens want to have a partner and remarry but because of the social unacceptance and negative attitude of the family they are not coming out and expressing their needs..

**Keywords:** Companionship, Remarriage, Senior citizens, 2nd innings.

### INTRODUCTION AGEING AND ELDERLY

The word „Aging“ has been defined variedly by researchers in different contents. Aging refers to a multidimensional process of physical, psychological, and social change (Hultsch and Deutsch 1998). It begins with conception and terminates with death. Aging may best be defined as the survival of a growing number of people who have completed the traditional adult roles of making a living and child bearing. Old age is also called later adulthood and according to some psychologists begins at the age of fifty one.

### ELDERLY AND MARRIAGE



The primary relationship for many older adults is their spouse. In later life, marriage often provides companionship, affection, personal and sexual intimacy, interdependence, belonging, and financial security. (Huyck, 1996)

Primarily the elderly citizens want a companion in the later life for social, emotional and physical support. Death of a spouse is one of the most difficult family transitions families go through – emotionally, socially, and financially. While death of any family member is tragic, the death of a long-time spouse is particularly devastating. Along with grieving the loss of the individual, the spouse is dealing with the loss of the role and identity of being a spouse and part of a couple. Widowhood for both spouse is associated with increased physical and mental health problems, as well as increased risk for serious illness, hospitalization, long- term care placement, and death (Laditka & Laditka, 2003; Pienta et al., 2000; Prigerson, Maciejewski, & Rosenheck, 2000; Smith, Zick, & Duncan, 1991).

The most-cited reason for remarriage in later life by both men and women is companionship (Bulcroft, Bulcroft, Hatch, & Borgatta, 1989; McKain, 1969). Women are also likely to remarry for economic security. Men tend to remarry more often than women; one study estimated that men are twice as likely as women to remarry (Burch, 1990).

One of the greatest obstacles older couples face in remarriage, however, is the negative attitudes and dissuasion of friends and family. In one study (McKain, 1969) about one in four couples almost did not marry because of negative social pressure particularly from their adult children. Other research shows that negative reaction from peers presents an even more deterring influence (Vinick, 1979). Much has changed over the last 25 years regarding social attitudes towards blended families. Some evidence suggests that cultural views are changing, particularly with regard to more positive support from children toward a parent’s remarriage (Vinick & Lanspery, 2000).

For many remarriages the approval of friends and family is more than a hurdle – it predicts the success of the marriage. Other factors found to be associated with successful remarriages in later life include home ownership of both parties prior to marriage, estate planning that reassures spouses they will be taken care of and reassures children they will not lose all their inheritance, a solid friendship of several years before the marriage, and common interests and activities (McKain, 1969; Vinick & Lanspery, 2000).

There is a need of such a project to be undertaken to help senior citizens to search for partner to make them physically and mentally healthy. This project of designing a Web Portal 2ndinnings.in was undertaken as there is a need of having a companion and remarriages at old age, senior citizens feel to have a partner at this age, but because of some social negativity and no support from family member the senior citizens do not open up.

#### OBJECTIVES BROAD OBJECTIVE

To design a web portal 2ndinnings.in for elderly citizens to help them find their life partners..

#### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

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To help elderly citizens to find their partners through a web portal

To launch a web portal to help elderly citizens to upload their bio-data To create a data base for elderly citizens interested in getting married **METHODOLOGY**

The very first step in implementing the project successfully was to plan the activities. This plan of activities act as a guideline, that has been attained through execution and planning of the activity, which helps in carrying the project smoothly and successfully. The present project on “An Action Project on Designing a Web Portal for Senior Citizens Interested in Marriage/Remarriage” was undertaken in following steps:

- o Survey in Senior Citizen Clubs and Identifying the Sample Ready to get Married/Remarried
- o Collecting Profile of the Senior Citizens
- o Developing Project Proposal
- o Registering Domain Name
- o Designing of the Web Portal
- Collection of the Content for the Web Portal
- Script Writing for the Web Portal
- Designing of the Web Portal
- o Validating the Web Portal
- o Launching of the Web Portal
- o Promotion of the Web Portal
- o Evaluation in terms of effectiveness of Web Portal

**SURVEY IN SENIOR CITIZENS CLUBS AND IDENTIFYING THE SAMPLE READY TO GET MARRIED/REMARRIED**

In order to develop a web portal for senior citizens it was important to identify the senior citizens interested in getting married/remarried. It was not necessary that all senior citizens wants to get married/remarried. Therefore, it was necessary to identify those senior citizens through visiting senior citizens clubs. There are senior citizens who want live-in relationship kind of relation. To identify such senior citizens it is necessary to go to a place where they are available in mass or in large number.

**COLLECTING PROFILE OF SENIOR CITIZENS**

For launching a web portal, the second step was to collect the profile of senior citizens. A proforma was prepared and distributed among the senior citizens of Baroda city to collect their background and personal details. The proforma consisted of two parts, which are as follows:

Background Information Personal Information

Around 100 profiles of senior citizens were collected at the time of developing the Web portal.



REGISTERING THE DOMAIN NAME

A domain name is the web address of the web portal, usually preceded by a „www“. While deciding the domain name it is very important to keep in mind that the address should be easy for senior citizens to remember and also it should express the purpose of the web portal. But at the same time it is important to select a short address, because too long or difficult to spell address can become a barrier in accessing the web portal. The users are likely to remember the name of the web portal if it is easy to spell and remember and has an actual keyword. www.2ndinnings.in was decided as the domain name of the web portal as this address is easy to remember and inspiration for elderly citizens.

DESIGNING A WEB PORTAL

Designing a web portal requires lot of planning, it is not one-day job and it is a long process and incessant even after the web portal was ready. It was very important for the project worker to thoroughly research the internet, articles related to elderly and plan the theme, content and design for the web portal as the main purpose of the web portal was to cater the needs of senior citizens.

COLLECTION OF CONTENT FOR THE WEB PORTAL

The content of the web portal was designed in such a way that it clearly conveys the purpose of the web portal to the users.

Following points were kept in mind while writing the content of the web portal: The purpose of the web portal

- Kind of audience that was to be reached
- Content needed in web portal
- Kind of images

The content was decided to be very simple, informal, concise and easily understandable to the senior citizens.

SCRIPT WRITING FOR THE WEB PORTAL

After deciding the content of the web portal, the next step was to prepare the script for the web portal. The project worker divided the main content into various features for making a logical sequence

HOME: the home page consists of the features like job, matrimonial and voluntary work. It also has various options like tips for active ageing, FAQ’s, Inquiry, Feedback, Gallery, about us, Blog, Contact us, Alerts and Quotes. All these features have been included in the web portal so as to help senior citizens to solve their query and even some of these features would help them share their views and express their feelings with others.

JOB: the web portal have job as one of the feature which includes Work and Elderly, Profiles, Organizations list, Registration, Active elderly citizens:

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**MATRIMONIAL:** another feature of the web portal is matrimonial which consists of: login, advance search, success story and registration from.

**VOLUNTARY WORK:** the web portal has one of the features as Voluntary work that includes: registration form for voluntary work, registration form for organization, list of volunteers: success stories and list of NGO's

**OTHER OPTIONS:** the web portal has various other options like: tips for active ageing, about us, FAQ's, inquiry, feedback, blog, contact us, alerts and quotes.

### DESIGNING OF THE WEB PORTAL

Information Technology is visual manifestation of the portal objective through the combination of content, layout, usability and navigation. Before starting the designing of the web portal, it was very important to know what was to be achieved, only then it was possible to start looking for the ways to reach there and start the journey. Planning for designing of the website was all about choosing the right concept and initializing the process.

### BELOW MENTIONED STEPS WERE FOLLOWED DESIGNING THE WEB PORTAL

Title of the web portal, page heading, logo, use of appropriate colors and fonts, appropriate use of images, page length, "look" consistency, simple navigation.

### VALIDATING THE WEB PORTAL

The web portal was given to five experts for purpose of validation. The experts were leading elderly citizens, computer experts and professors from the following departments:

- Department of Education and Psychology, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara.
- Computer experts
- Leading elderly citizens

### LAUNCHING OF THE WEB PORTAL

The web portal was launched on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 2011 at Naturopathy Senior Citizen's Club, Karelibag, Vadodara.

### PROMOTION OF THE WEB PORTAL

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After launching the web portal project workers had done the promotion of the web portal in different ways (For the larger benefit of the elderly citizens) like by print media, electronic media, radio, through internet, and visiting senior citizen clubs. Project worker also approach different organizations and institutions to inform them about the web portal, so that a link canbe formed between the elderly citizens and organization. The project worker could able to convince below listed organizations, as they were ready to take elder volunteers in their organizations. Name of those organizations are as below:

- Baroda Citizens Council
- Bal Bhavan Society
- Bal Gokulam (Children Home)
- Olakh
- Swami Premdas Jalaram Trust
- Smt. Arvindaben Modi Lok Seva Samiti

## EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

Evaluation of any project is essential for measuring effectiveness of the project. It is a systematic process, which determines the value, effectiveness or significance of the project. For the present project, evaluation was done on different by using reaction scale, referring registration number, feedback, inquiry, e-mails, phone calls and hits of the web portal.

## MAJOR OUTCOMES OF THE PROJECT

- Most of the leading senior citizens expressed that the address of the Web Portal was relevant and significant to remember. They also said that the web portal is beneficial to combat loneliness because it is a friendly medium and the features in the web portal are relevant and appropriate for them as good justice is given and they can even get more knowledge.
- Majority of the senior citizens said that the components in the web portal are helpful as it serves social aspects of the society. Some of the them said that it is a step forward for them. Most of the senior citizens expressed that the registration form was easy to understand as it was simple requiring basic details but was lengthy and they also expressed that the concept of marriage is very helpful to combat loneliness at this age but two of them opined that it is only helpful if one get a suitable match.

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS



Through this project it has been observed that the web portal proved to be helpful medium for finding a life partner. It is being observed that senior citizens want to have a partner and remarry but because of social unacceptance and negative attitude of the family they are not coming out and expressing their needs. This type of initiative helps senior citizens to deal with their problems.

At this age also senior citizens needs support of someone who can be able to share emotional and physical feelings. Senior citizens need a partner to support them at every stage. Because of such socialization in the society they were not opening out and also there were no such opportunity to find a partner for them to marry/remarry at this age.

This web portal has helped them to come out of the fear of society and find their life partner. Web portal as a medium to find partner is proved to be a very effective medium as many of the senior citizens has uploaded their bio data on their own and also appreciated the web portal as an effective medium for them to find a partner. On the part of the civil society it is expected that more sensitivity is to created on such an aspect of remarriages of senior citizens for their physical and mental wellbeing and support their feelings for their happiness.

There is a need among the society to sensitize and help senior citizens by supporting them and understanding their problems and feelings to give them an opportunity to live better quality of life and remain mentally and physically well.

Below listed are few suggestions to make the web portal more effective: Facility of increasing or decreasing the font size should be added Web portal should be bilingual Doctor’s helpline facility and other activities like games and music should be added in the web portal

Movement of alerts and quotes should be slower to improve readability More health tips should be given and added time to time so that more people may take advantage of the web portal

More information related to fitness exercise, health problems and aging should be included

Such projects should be continued and should educate other people to enlighten the life of senior citizens

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