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Psychological Wellbeing Among Elderly People

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Abstract

The present research aimed to find the level of psychological wellbeing among elderly people. The total 60 sample were taken out which 30 were male and 30 female (above 60 years), further these two groups were divided into two more groups on the basis of religion (Hindu and Christian) with 15 subjects each. Ryff's Psychological wellbeing scale was used for data collection; t-test was applied to check the difference in psychological wellbeing scores. Result reveals that significant difference in psychological wellbeing with respect to gender. Whereas insignificant difference is found among mean scores of Hindu and Christian subjects in respect to their psychological wellbeing.

Key words: Psychological Wellbeing, Elderly, Gender, Religion

Introduction

The human age is a physiological and dynamic process ongoing with time. According to Stieglitz "Aging is a part of living", it begins with conception and ends with death. Old age is the most critical period of human life cycle. In this stage physical and mental ability reduces, psychological wellbeing and attitude towards life satisfaction are affected. According to Sethi & Gupta (1980) aging is a normal stage of life, which comes to every person, Saraswati (1988) also believed that old age is that stage of life in which wisdom is personified, the fruit of well-spent life is enjoyed and unquestionable power of authority and respect are obtained. With the passage of time Indian population increased from 36.7 in 1951 to more than 67.14 in 2012. Likewise the population of older adults (above 60 years) in India increased to 102 millions in 2011 Census of India (2011). Which shows males outnumbered females in India? The total elderly population in India (above 60 years) increased from 24 million in 1961, to 43 million in 1981 It further increased to 57 million in 1991 and to 77 million in 2001 and is expected to rise to 301million in 2051 and 340million in 2061 (Liebig, 2003).

Researches indicate that old age is more vulnerable to certain losses. Elderly people lose their life partners, relatives, friends, neighbor due to disease, divorce, death, geographical mobility, retirement etc. It is that stage of life in which people face various common problems viz physical helplessness, economic insecurity, loneliness, increased leisure time, lack of social support and health complaints etc., which directly affect the mental health as well as psychological wellbeing.

Psychological wellbeing is defined as people's evaluations of their own lives. Such evaluations can be both cognitive judgments, such as life satisfaction, and there emotional responses to events, such as feeling positive emotions. It is a wide concept includes different aspects of everyday experience. How people think, feel, behave, and take decisions etc. It is a subjective concept which commonly describes the mental state of the individual. Ryff *et al.* (1989) psychological wellbeing refers to the extent to which people feel that they have meaningful control over their life and their activities.

Psychological wellbeing may be defined by the proper functioning of psychological system. Positive functioning encompasses six dimensions of psychological well-being: self-acceptance, positive relations with others, personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery, and autonomy. Each dimension of psychological wellbeing contributes to mental health.

With the extraordinary increase in the number of oldest adults, several studies have focused on centenarians and their lives exploring factors related with life span, like physical health, generic influences, way of life style etc. Little accentuation has been given to social, psychological and mental health. However in India, most of the research on aging is primarily confined to socio demographic profiles. As a result certain issues related to the problems of elderly have received insufficient attention to the

scholars and one such area is elderly mental health, psychological wellbeing etc. Indeed, even speculation about the nature of the problem has been difficult because of intangibility and affectability of the problem. The elderly population encounters mental health issues and psychological disorders like, anxiety, stress, depression, helplessness, hopelessness, loneliness etc.

Chalise (2014) in his study revealed that many elderly living in the Briddashrm are suffering from depression. Finding indicates that 57.8% had depression. Among them 46.7% had mild, 8.9% had moderate and 2.2% had severe depression. Yuriko & Masumi (2003) found that psychological well being decreases with increasing age. Tejal (2010) found that institutionalized aged experience poor sense of psychological wellbeing than the non institutionalized aged. Results also uncovered that females and lower age group subjects have greater psychological wellbeing than the males and higher age group. Mughal & Fatma (2015) found significant difference in depression and psychological wellbeing with respect to both elderly males and females. Ranjan *et al.* (2013) in their study found that 47.33% of population had depression. Among them 70.42% had mild depression and 29.58% had severe levels of depression. Narkhede, Likhar, & Rana (2012) reported that elderly who live with their spouses in old age homes had better scores on psychological well-being. Yoon & Lee (2007) investigated psychological wellbeing among rural elderly. Results show significant association between dimension of social support and psychological wellbeing. Wong, Yoo & Stewart (2007) reported more social support significantly contributed to better overall psychological wellbeing. Mani, Udayakumar, Annamalai, & Ramasamy (2014) highlighted that 18% elders had high stress level and 60% had moderate stress. Results also revealed that gender and co-living status with spouse was significantly associated with stress.

Methodology

Statement of the Problem

To assess the level of psychological wellbeing among elderly people

Objectives

1. To find the level of psychological well being among male and female elderly people
2. To find the level of psychological well being among Hindu and Christian elderly people

Hypotheses

1. There would be a significant difference found between psychological wellbeing of male and female elderly.
2. There would be a significant difference found between the psychological wellbeing of Hindu and Christian elderly.

Variables

Independent Variable: - Gender and Religion

Dependent Variable: - Psychological well-being

Sample

The study consists of 60 elderly subjects (above 60 years) selected through random sampling technique, Further these 60 subjects were equally divided into two groups (30 male and 30 female), these two groups were subdivided into two more groups on the basis of religion (15 Hindu and 15 Christian).

Measuring Tool

Ryff's 42 item version Psychological Well-Being Scales (PWB) was used for data collection. The scale consists 42 items among 20 items are negative and 22 items are positive. The inventory consists of a series of statements reflecting the six areas of psychological well being Autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self acceptance. Respondent's rate statement on a scale of 1 to 6 with 1 indicates strong disagreement and 6 indicates strong agreements. Positive items are scored as 1, 2, 3,4,5,6 and negative items are scores in reverse form therefore 6, 5, 4,3,2,1 respectively.

Results

The main purpose of the present study was to study the level of Psychological wellbeing among elderly people. The whole data was obtained by using the Reff's Psychological wellbeing scale. Obtained scores were assigned for different responses according

to the item. t- test was applied to calculate the data. Mean and S.D value of every group was also calculated. Results are given in tables.

Table -1

Showing Gender wise Mean, S.D, SEM and t- value of Psychological Wellbeing Scores

Area	Gender	No	Mean	S.D	SEM	df	t-value
Psychological wellbeing	Male	30	161.33	53.41	9.75		
	Female	30	126.36	40.47	7.39	58	2.85*

* =Significant at the 0.05 level

The table shows Mean, S.D, and SEM of Male and Female elderly subjects in respect to their Psychological wellbeing, the obtaining finding are [Male, M= 161.33, S.D= 53.41, SEM= 9.75), (Female, M= 126.36, S.D= 40.47, SEM=7.39) and t-value = 2.85] respectively.

Table -2

Showing Religion wise Mean, S.D, SEM and t- value of Psychological Wellbeing Scores

Area	Religion	No	Mean	S. D	SEM	df	t-value
Psychological wellbeing	Hindu	30	150.26	52.14	9.52		
	Christian	30	137.43	48.16	8.79	58	.99 NS

N.S= Insignificant at the 0.05 level

In the above given table in Mean, S.D, and SEM of Hindu and Christian subjects are shown in respect to their Psychological wellbeing, [Hindu, M= 150.26, S.D= 52.14, SEM= 9.52), (Christian, M= 137.43, S.D= 48.16, SEM=8.79) and obtained t-value = .99] respectively.

Discussion

The results of the present study confirmed that male elderly subjects have better psychological wellbeing than female elderly subjects. The mean scores (161.33) of male subjects in respect to psychological well was found more than mean scores (126.36) of female subjects. Significant difference were also found between the mean scores of psychological wellbeing in respect to gender, the obtained t- value (2.85) was found significant at 0.05 level. Therefore the first hypothesis is accepted. Hence on the basis of our findings we can say that male elderly enjoy the prosperous and happy life than female elderly, as their psychological wellbeing is better than elderly female group.

On the other side our finding did not show any significant differences between the mean scores of Hindu and Christian subjects in respect to their psychological wellbeing. The obtained t- value (.99) was found insignificant at 0.05 level, therefore our second hypothesis is rejected. But we found that the psychological wellbeing of Hindu subjects is better than Christian subjects as the obtained mean scores of Hindu group (150.26) is more than mean scores of Christian group (137.43) respectively.

Conclusion

This study examined the level of psychological wellbeing among elderly people. The first objective was to find the level of psychological well being among male and female elderly people, and second objective was to find the level of psychological well being among Hindu and Christian elderly people. On applying the t-test significant mean differences were found between the mean scores of male and female subjects in respect to their psychological well being, whereas insignificant mean differences were found between psychological wellbeing scores of Hindu and Christian subjects Therefore on the basis of our finding we can conclude that gender is an influential factor in psychological wellbeing whereas religion is not.

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