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A STUDY ON PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL BEING OF ELDERLY PEOPLE LIVING IN PALAKKAD DISTRICT OF KERALA

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ABSTRACT

The article describes the psychological well-being of elderly people in Palakkad district of Kerala. Elderly is a natural process that starts with intrauterine life and continues till death. This stage of life consists of physiological, psychological, sociological and chronological changes (Dolu and Nahcivan, 2019). Elderly is also termed as the period of stress and strain. Psychological problems are common among people who are more than 55 years of age this is due to biological changes and social changes they face in their life (Orben, et.al., 2020). Thus it is essential to sort out the problems of elderly by providing them proper psychological care and support. Psychological well-being is a complex and personal phenomenon which forms as a result of human activity in the system of real relationships with surrounding objects. This well-being focuses on fulfillment of human potential (Granow, et. al., 2018). Thus in the present descriptive study psychological well-being of elderly was examined.

Key words: *Elderly people, Psychological well-being and Kerala.*

INTRODUCTION

Ageing is a universal phenomenon that affects everyone. The phenomenon of rapid population aging all around the world is rapidly increasing, causing widespread alarm. Moreover, the elderly population of the world is projected to grow almost double, from 12 percent even up to 22 percent beginning from the year 2015 to 2050 (Roberts, et. al., 2018). According to the 2011 census, there were 77 million elderly persons living in India and the number is bound to touch 177 million in the next 25 years. The aging process is termed as a biological reality which has its own dynamic, largely beyond human control. The age of 60 or 65, roughly equivalent to retirement ages in most developed countries is said to be the beginning of old age. As per the reports published by the government of India and according to the Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation in 2016, the total number of the elderly population rose to 121.9 million (Snyder, 2018). This included 103.9 million people were at the age of 60 years and above. This data clearly illustrates that 8.6% of the total population of our nation consists of older persons. In many parts of the developing world, chronological time has little or no importance in the meaning of old age. The concept of old age is determined socially and culturally and thus can be varied across generations and cultures and different serial dimensions of life (Vanleerberghe, 2017). Old age is taken to be a period of decline in the life of an organism. Although it is primarily a physiological phenomenon, it gets reflected in an individual's economic, psychological and social aspects, and affects them substantially. Hence it is essential to maintain the psychological well-being of elderly people to balance their emotional and mental status.

Psychological well-being is a malleable concept that deals with the feelings of people on their everyday life situation (Iani, et. al., 2017). Those feelings may range from negative mental states to a positive overview of the life situations. Thus the terms Psychological well-being is a multi-dimensional concept which include wide range of concepts including both emotional and cognitive elements that embrace the everyday experiences of individuals. Psychological well-being can be defined as a person's evaluative reaction to his or her life either in terms of life satisfaction or effective balance or to the extent to which the psychological well-being resides within the experience of the individual (Heintzelman, 2018). The psychological well-being has been guided by two broad traditions such as hedonic and eudemonic perspectives.

- The hedonic concept equates well-being with happiness and is often marked as the balance between positive and negative effect.
- The eudemonic perspective assesses how well people are living in relation to their true selves.

The multi-dimensional model of Psychological well-being explained by Carol Ryff (1995) consists of six dimensions which includes:

- i. **Autonomy** : A sense of self determination, independence and regulation of behavior from within
- ii. **Environmental mastery** : A capacity to effectively manage one's life and surrounding world
- iii. **Personal growth** : Sense of continued growth and development as a person
- iv. **Positive relation with others** : The possession of quality relations with others
- v. **Purpose in life** : the believe that one's life is purposeful and meaningful

vi. Self-acceptance: Positive evaluation of one self and one's past life.

Psychological well-being evolves to the extent to which the individual is capable of successfully interacting with their environment and assuming the vital challenges inherent to the different stages in life. Older people are much vulnerable to psychological disturbances because they face losses at their family and friends, decreased mobility and income which leads elderly to become more isolated that leads to increased emotional disturbances. Changes that are occurring during old age affect their psychological well-being. Hence in this study an attempt was made to analyse the psychological well-being of elderly people in Palakkad district of Kerala.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is Quantitative in nature and is conducted by using primary data. Questionnaire was used by the researcher to collect the necessary and relevant data for this study. Self-structured Questionnaire was developed to analyse the personal profile of the respondents. The present study adopts Psychological Well-being scale developed by Ryff (1995). The tool consists of 42 items sub divided into 6 dimensions such as autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relation with others, purpose in life and self-acceptance. The survey was conducted in Palakkad district of Kerala and 75 responses were collected. As the population was small & homogeneous, all subsets of the frame are given an equal probability. Thus non-probability sampling method was used. Under non-probability technique, convenience sampling method was used.

Research Design

The present research is Descriptive in nature. Descriptive research design is a fact finding investigation to identify the concepts and elaborate it with sufficient interpretation. This study focuses on the detailed report on the psychological well-being of the elderly population living in Palakkad District, Kerala. Hence, Descriptive research design is adopted in this study.

Objectives of the study

- To find out the personal profile of the respondents.
- To analyse the psychological well-being of the respondents.
- To identify the relationship between personal profile and psychological well-being of the respondents.

Hypothesis

- There is no significant relationship between personal profile and psychological well-being of the respondents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Personal Profile

The Descriptive results of the personal profile of the respondents are provided. This study focused on five aspects such as age, gender, education, and marital status. Table 1 displays the personal profile of the study.

Table 1: Personal Profile

<i>Personal Data</i>		<i>Frequency</i> (N = 75)	<i>Percentage</i> (%)
<i>Age</i>	60 - 69 years	19	25.3
	70 - 79 years	17	22.7
	80 years & Above	39	52
<i>Gender</i>	Male	46	61.3
	Female	29	38.7
<i>Education</i>	Illiterate	20	26.7
	Primary Education	19	25.3
	High School	17	22.7
	Pre Degree	16	21.3
	Degree & Above	3	4
<i>Marital Status</i>	Married	20	26.7
	Unmarried	4	5.3
	Widow	45	60
	Separated	6	8
<i>Living Status</i>	Stays with life partner	19	25.3
	Stays with Children	36	49
	Stays with Relatives	20	26.7
<i>Family Status</i>	Joint family	56	74.7
	Nuclear family	19	25.3

The table no. 1 shows that exactly 1/4th of the respondents (25.3%) belong to the age group of 60 - 69 years. More than half of the respondents 61.3% are Males and the remaining 38.7% are Females. A little more than 1/4th of the respondents (26.7%) are illiterates, followed by 25.3 per cent of the respondents had their primary education. Among the total respondents more than half of the respondents (60%) are widow whereas 26.7 per cent of the respondents are married. It was found that nearly half of the respondents (49%) stay with their children, followed by a little more than 1/4th of the respondents (26.7%) stay with their relatives whereas 25.3 per cent stay

with their life partner. Majority 3/4th of the respondents (74.7%) are living in joint families and the remaining respondents are living in nuclear families.

Level of Psychological Well-being among the Elderly people

The psychological well-being of the elderly people is categorized into low, moderate and high and the findings are reported in the table 2.

Table 2: Level of Psychological Well-being

S.No	Dimensions of Psychological Well-being	Level of Psychological Well-being					
		Low		Moderate		High	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Autonomy	18	24	32	43	25	33
2	Environmental Mastery	24	32	35	47	16	21
3	Personal Growth	10	13	44	59	21	28
4	Positive Relations	16	21	32	43	27	36
5	Purpose in life	18	24	40	53	17	23
6	Self-acceptance	8	11	37	49	30	40

The table no 2 has shown the level of psychological well-being reported by the respondents. Among the total six dimensions of psychological well-being, more than half of the respondents (59%) reported that they have moderate level of personal growth followed by 53 per cent of the respondents stated that their purpose in life is also moderate. The factor self-acceptance has shown a considerable amount for both moderate and high level with 49 and 40 per cent respectively. It was also reported by 32 per cent of the respondents that their level of environmental mastery is low when compared to other factors.

*Relationship between Personal Profile and Psychological Well-being among the Elderly people***Table 3: Relationship between Personal Profile and Psychological Well-being**

S.No	Personal Profile	r value	Sig. Value	Sig. / Not Sig.
1	Age	.944	.000	S
2	Gender	.132	.260	NS
3	Marital Status	.871	.000	S
4	Living Status	.753	.048	S
5	Family Status	.326	.005	S

The findings from the table no 3 reveals the relationship between the personal profile such as age, gender, marital status, living status and family status of the elderly people towards their psychological well-being. Karl Pearson's Correlation was used to test the relationship and it was revealed that the variables age ($r = .944$, $p < 0.05$), marital status ($r = .871$, $p < 0.05$), living status ($r = .753$, $p < 0.05$) and family status ($r = .326$, $p < 0.05$) of the elderly people have a positive and significant relationship with psychological well-being whereas, it was also found that there is no significant relationship exist between gender ($r = .132$, $p > 0.05$), and psychological well-being.

CONCLUSION

The results of the current study show that the gender of elderly people has an impact on their psychological well-being. The health and wellness of older people are affected by their way of life they are living. Thus it is essential to accept the fact that not only younger age groups, but also older adults need much attention especially to maintain their level of psychological well-being in their life. The low level of psychological well-being is typically observed among the older people who are living alone or away from their family members. Therefore it is necessary to provide psychological and counselling services for the older people to maintain their psychological wellness.

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