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Psychological perception of elderly women towards old age

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Abstract

This research was conducting to analyzing the psychological perception of elderly women towards old age who were receiving old age samman allowance (OASA) which is also known as old age pension. Study was piloted in four randomly selected villages from Hisar and Rohtak administrative divisions of Haryana state covering 200 elderly women beneficiaries of age 62 years or above of old age samman allowance (OASA) scheme. The mean family size was 6.40 in Bhiwani district and 5.48 in Hisar district with the average size of total sample being 5.94. Regarding type of family, majority of elderly women were residing in joint families (81.5%) and rest in nuclear families (18.5%). Overall positive mean perception score was 3.49 (out of 5) irrespective of the districts while negative mean perception score was 3.58 (out of 5).

Keywords: Perception, old age, OASA, women

Introduction

Old age known as the final phase of a person's life cycle, which is characterized by a decrease in physical activity, a decrease in mental capacity, a gradual cessation of social activity, and a shift in economic status. Aging is a common phase of life and everyone had to face it. It refers to a multi-faceted process of physical, psychological, and social change. While some rates increase and increase over time, others decrease. Perception regarding old age means perception is the way in which something is regarded, understood, or interpreted. Perception of ageing can be a criterion for aging satisfaction and reflects level of adaptation to age-dependent changes. Perception regarding old age is referred as the way the respondents understood or considered of their own aging. There has been a steady increase in the number and half of the adult population in the world and in India over time, especially after 1950s. The number of people over the age of 60 increased to 7.0% in 2001. With the increase in the number of older people and the expected decline in the number of middle-aged people, the burden of care is increasing. Although the Indian families had informal support such as joint families, relatives and the social groups. To find the answers to all these questions related to negative and positive perception towards old age, the study was organized in a high-quality way so that those women could express their views in their own words. This study was conducted to examine the perception of older women towards old age who were getting old age samman allowance (OASA). As government of India has started many programme and policies like Annapurna, Indira Gandhi National Widow pension scheme (IGNWPS), tax concession for elderly, seat reservations etc. for upliftment of rural people and women same as Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension scheme (IGNOAPS) also start by government of India which is also known as Old Age Samman Allowance (OASA) in Haryana. Pension is delivered under different criteria and amount in all states after including state and central contribution. In Haryana present old age pension amount is 2500rs per month.

Materials and Methods

The present study on "psychological perception of elderly women towards old age" was conducted in four randomly selected villages from Hisar and Rohtak administrative divisions of Haryana state covering 200 elderly women beneficiaries of age 62 years or above of OASA scheme. The selected villages were Sangwan I & Kharkari Sohan (Bhiwani district) and Dhanderi & Kanwari (Hisar district). Data were collected by using semi structured interview schedule and analyzed by application of frequency, percentages, and mean score. The two open-ended questions i.e. 'what would you say are the most positive five things about growing older?' and 'what would you say are the most negative five things about growing older were

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directed to the respondents. On the basis of obtained responses, top 10 statements (five positive and negative each) mentioned by maximum number of respondents were considered to indicate perception regarding old age.

Results and Discussion

Distribution of the elderly women by size and type of family

Data in Table 1 indicate the type and size of the elderly women’s family. Family size of the selected elderly women was between 1-13 members. Most of the elderly women had 6-9 family members (59.0%) in their family followed by 2 to 5 family members (29.0%), and 10-13 family members (10.0%). Only 2.0 percent elderly women were living alone and had no family member except them. The mean family

size was 6.40 in Bhiwani district and 5.48 in Hisar district with the average size of total sample being 5.94. Regarding type of family, it was found that majority of elderly women were residing in joint families (81.5%) and rest in nuclear families (18.5%). (Figure 1). Family size of the elderly women varied between 1- 13 members i.e. four elderly women living alone to 13 members living under one roof and 81.5 percent families were joint. Dominance of joint family system in the present study is a pointer to the existence of traditional family structure in rural Haryana. Various studies by Suryavanshi (2007) [2]; and Srivastava & Kandpal (2014) [1] *et al.* Singh S (2014) [3] have brought out similar findings. The higher number of joint families could be because of the focus of study being on elderly women. A family having an elderly person is indicative of at least two generations living together.

Table 1: Distribution of the elderly women by size and type of family

Personal Variable	Categories	Bhiwani (n ¹ =100) f (%)	Hisar (n ² =100) f (%)	Total N=200 f (%)
Family size (1-13 members)	No family member (except the elderly women)	3 (3.0)	1 (1.0)	4 (2.0)
	2 to5 members	33 (33.0)	25 (25.0)	58 (29.0)
	6-9 members	55 (55.0)	63 (63.0)	118 (59.0)
	10-13 members	9 (9.0)	11 (11.0)	20 (10.0)
	Mean family size	6.40	5.48	5.94
Family type	Nuclear	15 (15.0)	22 (22.0)	37 (18.5)
	Joint	85 (85.0)	78 (78.0)	163 (81.5)



Fig 1: Distribution of the elderly women by size and type of family

Psychological perception of the elderly women regarding old age

Table 2 reveals perception of elderly women regarding old age. There were ten statements depicting perception of the elderly women out of which five were related to positive perception and five pertained to negative perception. It can be seen from table that majority of the elderly women had positive perception regarding old age and believed that old age is a stage of care, love & affection (88.5%), stage of

evaluation of life (74.5%) and age of enjoyment with next generation (71.0%). Comparatively less proportion of the elderly women perceived old age as the age of satisfaction (58.0%) and age of relaxation and meditation (57.0%). Overall mean positive perception score of the elderly women was 3.49 out of 5 irrespective of the districts. Mean score of the elderly women on positive perception statements was comparatively higher in Hisar district (3.74) than in Bhiwani district (3.24) (Lutsky NS, 1980 and Richeson JA 2006) [4, 5].

Table 2: Perception of the elderly women regarding old age

Statements	Bhiwani (n ¹ =100) f (%)	Hisar (n ² =100) f (%)	Total N=200 f (%)
It is the stage of proper care, love and affection	86 (86.0)	91 (91.0)	177 (88.5)
It is the stage of evaluation of life	72 (72.0)	77 (77.0)	149 (74.5)
It is the age of enjoyment with the next generation	66 (66.0)	76 (76.0)	142 (71.0)
It is the age of satisfaction	51 (51.0)	65 (65.0)	116 (58.0)
It is the age of relaxation and meditation	49 (49.0)	65 (65.0)	114 (57.0)
Mean positive perception score	3.24	3.74	3.49
Old people are the liability for the family	82 (82.0)	86 (86.0)	168 (84.0)
Stage of physical and mental problems	80 (80.0)	87 (87.0)	167 (83.5)
It is the age of differences in view point	67 (67.0)	65 (65.0)	132 (66.0)
Stressful stage due to lose of working ability	61 (61.0)	67 (67.0)	128 (64.0)
It is a stage of loneliness	59 (59.0)	63 (63.0)	122 (61.0)
Mean negative perception score	3.49	3.68	3.58

In terms of negative perception related statements it was found that 80.0 percent elderly women perceived that old age persons are liability for the family and 83.5 percent old age is the stage of physical and mental problems, while more than 60.0 percent elderly women perceived old age as the age of differences in view point (66.0%), stressful stage due to loss of working ability (64.0%) and stage of loneliness (61.0%). Overall negative mean perception score was 3.58 (out of 5) irrespective of the districts.

Conclusion

Family size of the elderly women varied between 1-13 members. Dominance of joint family system in the present study is a pointer to the existence of traditional family structure in rural Haryana. Majority of the respondents stated that old age is the stage of proper care, love and affection, stage of evaluation of life and the age of enjoyment with the next generation. While in negative perception elderly women's feel that old age is the stage of physical and mental problems, differences in view point and stage of loneliness. Mean score of the elderly women on positive perception statements was comparatively higher in Hisar district (3.74) than in Bhiwani district (3.24). Mean score of the elderly women on positive perception statements was also higher in Hisar district (3.68) than in Bhiwani district (3.49).

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