

STUDY OF AGEING EFFECT ON PERCEIVED LONELINESS OF OLD AGE PEOPLE

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ABSTRACT:

In twenty one century the old age people are facing the problem of loneliness. It depends on several factors e.g. social circles, single families, busy life style of their own family members, ageing effects, emotional imbalance, physical and mental health. The present study is to find out the effect of ageing on perceived Loneliness of old age people. The sample consists of 200 people, out of which 100 are of 40-45 age of group and 100 are of 60-65 age of group. The data is collected from the jodhpur city. Level of perceived loneliness is measured through Loneliness Scale developed by Praveen Kumar Jha (1997). The data were obtained and analyzed by means of 't'-test. It was found that there is a significant difference in the level of perceived loneliness between the old age people and adults. The result shows that the old age people are facing loneliness due to living alone, lack of close family ties and reduce connections with their family and friends, which result in an inability to actively participate in the community activities.

KEY WORDS: Old age people, Ageing effect, Perceived loneliness.

INTRODUCTION

LONELINESS

Loneliness is a depressing feeling related to the person's own experience of poor social relations. When people feel lonely they become sad and they start perceiving things negatively. Every person in their life once and more feel lonely. The two major determinants of loneliness are most often defined on the basis of two causal models. The first model is about the external factors which says that absent in the social network is the main cause of the loneliness, while the second descriptive model refers to the internal factors, such as personality, behaviour and psychological factors.

Loneliness also depends on the emotional mental state. Emotional people easily get hurt by the other persons and feel isolated. Emotional persons also prefer isolation then to be with fake or two-faced people. Emotional people easily carry away by emotions and other people easily get the advantage of that. So, most of the emotional people choose to be alone. They easily break their trust on others.

A study in Stockholm (1725) of individuals over 80 years old concluded that loneliness is related to age, sex, marital status, family relations, social contacts, social groups, friends, health and cognitive function. The main predictors for loneliness are dissatisfaction with social relation and surroundings, followed by low self-perceived health and impaired cognitive function.

Loneliness sometimes leads to health-related consequences. In the Gothenburg study Svanborg showed that loneliness results in more medical consultations. Loneliness is one of the three main causes leading to depression, and an important cause of suicide and suicide attempts. In 60% suicide attempts, loneliness is the main reason for 44% of these cases.

Loneliness also affects the whole life of the person. Lonely people always surrounded with depressed feelings and maximum time they think negative to the situations. Some old age people leave by their children. They have to live in old age homes for rest of their life. They feel disrespect. They are neglected by their own children. In such age they cannot tolerate this all and become so negative to their life. Some old age people cannot face this reality and go to depression.

Loneliness in old age also occurs by the death of life partner either the wife or the husband. In old age the husband and wife are the only people who live together all the day. They are the best company to each other. They have passed their whole life with each other. But if one of them dies the other one becomes so lonely. In old age emotional imbalance also takes place and on top of that the death of the partner affects them badly. They feel very isolated.

Most of the old age people feel lonely in a room full of others because elderly can be deeply lonely. Old people could be surrounded by hundreds of people, but if there is no one they can rely on, no one who knows them, they will feel isolated. Standing or living in crowd doesn't mean people are not lonely. It depends on the no.of people they interact with and share with our lives.

Some people choose loneliness for their life. They feel happier to be alone. They select isolation in the place of selfish people. The study says that the people who select isolation is also the emotionally weak from inside because they prefer to be alone in spite of living with the people who don't understand them and hurt them. They are usually very sensitive to the feelings. They find it difficult to deal with practical people. At last they select loneliness and feel happy to live alone. Some of them are nature lover too. They want to live in fully natural environment so they migrate to the lonely places where the human activities are at the minimum level.

PERCEIVED LONELINESS AND OLD AGE PEOPLE

Loneliness is common in old age people in this century. People become more ambitious to their life and more practical to life. The old age people are feeling lonely because they find himself unable to compete with the present scenario. Old age people have so many issues like health problems, physical fitness, illness etc. so they fail to maintain a desire space for them in today's fast life. In result they feel lonely.

Causes that make old age people feel lonely are:

Physical health issues: In old age people start suffering from physical health issues. Most of the old age people face similar problems like diabetes, heart related problems, alzheimer, cancer etc. Old age people are facing these types of problems from which they can't participate in social gathering. They feel isolation because of health problems and they have to stay back. After that they are departing from the society and start feeling lonely.

Energy level: in old age energy level starts decreasing due to old age effect and health problems. Old age people comparatively become less energetic than adults. The energy level depends on their proper diet and fitness, but diseases and physical illness decline their energy level. In result they start avoiding go outside and they avoid effectively participate in the social circles.

Peaceful environment: old age people need peaceful environment. They can't bear noisy environment. So they hesitate to involve in parties and celebrations and most of the time they live alone in their home.

Busy life style of family members: in today's life people are very busy in their own life. They even don't have time for their family members. Earlier time ladies used to spend their lives in homes and took good care of their elders. But now a day's they start doing jobs. Even they don't have time for their parents to take proper care. Children usually take admissions in day boarding schools. So no family member left in family to spend their time with old age people.

Free time: old age people have too much free time to think over the things and emotions. They probably have done their all duties almost and they retire from job and they become free. In their free lives they don't get companies to share their problems and feeling. So they start feeling lonely. Without the suitable company they face loneliness.

Emotional imbalance: emotional imbalance is more common in old age. Elderly people become more emotional. Most of the time they spend recalling the past memories and they compare their early life to the present life. Health problems make them weak and negativity surrounds them. So old age people become emotional imbalance. Some time they feel happy and the same time they become angry on little things. They become unable to balance their emotions.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The formation of meaningful social connections is an integral part of human nature (Baumeister and Leary, 1995). Some old age people have difficulty to build social connections; whereas others make such social relations but lose them because of separation, widowhood, or other tragedies of life. Individuals without making meaningful social connections are at risk for isolation, an aversive experience that all humans experience at one time or another.

Humans born to the longest period of dependency of any Species and dependent on co-specific across the lifespan to survive and prosper, do not fare well, either, whether they are living solitary lives or whether they simply perceive that they live in isolation. The average person spends about 80% of waking hours in the company of others, and the time with others is preferred to the time spent alone (Emler, 1994; Kahneman *et al.* 2004).

Social isolation, in contrast, is associated not only with lower subjective well-being but also with broad-based Morbidity and mortality (Berscheid, 1985; Burt, 1986; Myers and Diener, 1995 and House *et al.* 1988).

Loneliness has also been related with the increasing of Alzheimer's disease (Wilson *et al.* 2007). The emotional, cognitive, and behavioral issues also contribute to the development of loneliness. For instance, emotional contagion refers to the tendency for the facial expressions, vocalizations, postures, and movements of interacting individuals to lead to a convergence of their emotions (Hatfield *et al.* 1994).

When people feel lonely, they become shyer, more restless, more aggressive, more socially awkward, and lower in self-esteem. Emotional contagion could therefore contribute to the spread of loneliness to those with whom they interact cognitively, loneliness can affect and be affected by what one perceives and desires in their social relationships (Wheeler *et al.* 1983).

Behaviorally, when people feel lonely, they tend to act toward others in a less trusting and more hostile fashion. These behaviors, in turn, may lower the satisfaction of others with the relationship or lead to a weakening or loss of the relationship and a consequent induction of loneliness in others.

PROBLEM

The statement of the problem is: STUDY OF AGEING EFFECT ON PERCEIVED LONELINESS OF OLD AGE PEOPLE

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of the present study is:

- Does Loneliness influenced by age of the people?

HYPOTHESIS

It was hypothesised for the present study that loneliness would differ with different age groups.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURE

The present study cannot be attempted in laboratory situation. Therefore, a co-relational field approach has taken for this study. This is a non-experimental type of research. Perceived Loneliness is dependent variable. Age is independent variable varied at two level; 40-45 age group and 60-65 age group.

METHODOLOGY

The present study has conducted on 200 old age people divided into two groups-100 people of 40 to 45 years of age and 100 people of 60 to 65 years of age.

TEST USED

For the present research study following test was used:

PERCEIVED LONELINESS SCALE: This scale is developed by Praveen Kumar Jha (1997). The scale consists of 36 items. Each item is rated on a five-point scale and the five options 5,4,3,2 and 1 stand for totally agree, agree, Can't say, Disagree, and totally disagree. An individual can score a maximum score of 180 and a minimum score of 36. The low score of an individual indicates low perceived loneliness whereas high score shows high perceived loneliness

PROCEDURE

The test was administered on each subject. Scoring procedure and method is as per manual provided.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Obtained data has analysed for the under mentioned information:

1. Means, standard deviations.
2. For determining significance of mean differences t-test has applied between groups.

RESULT

Table no. 1

Age groups	Mean	SD	t
40-45	98.630	5.355	22.319
60-65	129.220	12.615	

$p < 0.1$

It was found that the perceived loneliness level is significantly higher in old age people of 60 to 65 age of group in comparison to adults of 40 to 45 age of group.

INTERPRETATION

Lower mean of first group indicates that less loneliness is perceived in early age but higher value of mean of second group indicates that loneliness increases significantly with increasing age. In this study the calculated t value is 22.319. This value shows higher level of significant difference between loneliness in old age and in adults. After retirement old people have no work to do all the day. They have whole day to be free. And on the other hand the adults have busy life and they don't have enough time to spend with elders at home. Children of the family usually go to day boarding schools; they too have not time to be with their grandparents. United family is also one of the big reasons of loneliness in old age people.

CONSEQUENCE AND IMPLICATION

Old age people are facing loneliness and of loneliness they are facing the depression. They are surrounded with negativity towards life. Old age people are becoming hopeless. The health problems are also raising and declining health is becoming

normal due to loneliness. Old age people are the main part of our lives and families but they are neglected by the society. They have equal right to live with happiness. We should give them proper attention and time so that they can live healthy. We should spend some time out of our daily busy life with elderly people. We should encourage them to become a part of society. We should make them feel they are important for us and we need them too.

Some ways are there from which we can reduce the level of loneliness in old age people:

Spend some time with them: we should daily spend some time with our elders. We should give them company and make them feel they are not alone. We should at least have dinner with them if possible so that they don't feel alone.

Encourage them to take part in social events: we should encourage them to take part in social gathering. We should support them not to hesitate with others as they are the most respectful person and we please to get you company. We should get out the fear and shyness from them.

Yoga classes: we should join them yoga classes. So that they remain healthy and they can get social circles there. Their health problems may decrease from yoga.

Meditation classes: meditation reduces the emotional imbalance. Old age people are suffering from emotional imbalance. They can get out of this from meditation and they also can control negative feelings. Meditation can improve their energy level too.

Secret counselling sessions: we should arrange secret counselling sessions for elderly people from this they can resolve their problem, make their life positive, and become optimist, share their emotional views and find good direction.

Share their knowledge: old age people are experienced people of society. They have ample knowledge of life. We should get good knowledge from them by deep conversations with them and arrange a platform for them to share their experience with us. From this we cannot only gain knowledge we also make them feel they are so useful for society.

Make group of similar age: we should make groups of similar age of senior citizens. In these types of groups they can share things to each other and do not feel lonely.

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