

Study of Adjustment Pattern Among rural and urban Aged Persons

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Abstract: Old age is defined as age of retirement that is 60 years and above. Improvement of health care technology has resulted in increased life expectancy – In India the elderly constitute about 7 percent of the total population and by 2016 the number is likely to increase to 10 percent. The problem of elderly is confined not only to their increasing numbers, but also includes mental stress and physical incapability felt by them. The scenario is changing and creating its impact on elderly. According to National sample survey organization, 367% of 70 million elderly want to shift to old homes because they can't manage alone. For this study we have collected five hundred and forty Rural and Urban male and female elderly under the age group of 60-74, 75-84 and 85 & above were randomly selected from Muzaffarpur District. Data was collected through exploratory and personal interview methods. Personal information schedule was used to elicit auxiliary information of the subjects regarding demographic variables. Old-age Adjustment Inventory Scale by Hussain and Kaur (1995) was employed to assess the adjustment pattern of rural and urban aged males. To explore the family members attitude towards elderly, Attitudes toward old people scale by Kogan (1993) was used. Socio Economic Status Scale by Aggarwal *et al.* (2005) was employed to assess the SES of the family. Differential design was used to compare the adjustment pattern among rural and urban elderly and correlation research design was employed to know the relationship between family members attitude towards elderly and adjustment pattern among rural and urban elderly. Family members' attitude had positive and significant relationship with home adjustment, social adjustment, marital adjustment, financial adjustment and also overall adjustment indicating positive the attitude of the family members' towards their elderly, better is the adjustment of elderly in the areas like home, social, marital, financial and overall adjustment.

Keywords: Adjustment pattern, Ageing, Attitude, Elderly.

I. Introduction

Adjustment is “a process involving both mental and behavioural responses by which an individual strives to cope with inner needs, tensions, frustrations and conflicts and to bring harmony between the inner demands and those imposed upon him by the world in which he lives” if the conflicts are solved. Ageing, the process of growing old regardless of chronological age, is the last stage in life-span. People during the sixties are usually referred to as “elderly”. In India however, all persons who are sixty years or above are considered or included among the aged. Ageing is a phase of life and a biological process. Every organism that is born must aged with time and decay. The portion of people aged 60 years or older is estimated to double from the 10% of the world population in 2002, to approximately 20% in 2050 (Chandah,2005).The increase in the older population indicates an overall improvement of the quality of life. Because of this situation, 21st century may be called as the ‘Era of Population Ageing’ (Ponnuswami 2005).

Ageing can be defined as a series of time related processes occurring in the adult individual that ultimately bring life to close. It is the most complex phenotype currently known and the only example of generalized biological dysfunction. Ageing influences an organism's entire physiology, impacts function at all levels, and increase susceptibility to all major chronic diseases. Elderly are most happy with family life especially with their children (Laidmae, *et al.*, 2012). Families are the cornerstone of all human societies which have been discovered in every human culture. It is a place where a person finds and expects the most encouragement, comfort and security and help if needed. On the other hand, adjustment of an individual

involves two conditions such as an attempts to meet the demands of the environment and perceiving and experiencing a sense of general well-being in relation to the environment.

Elder masses often find it difficult to adjust with the new generation due to generation gap. They have their own mental set and pattern of life but very often they try to superimpose their own ideas. They are prone to oppose the modern trends and lifestyle due to lack of adjustment or dominating nature. To be well adjusted in old age one must be able to satisfy their personal needs and live up to the expectations of others within the framework of life provided for them. Attitudes of grown up children towards their elderly parents and frequent associations with them contribute to good personal and social adjustment on the part of the Elderly. A resistant attitude toward aging and to adjustment to changes in aging brings is a serious obstacle to successful adjustment in old age. Hence the elderly citizens are in need of urgent attention. They do not need ones pity, but the understanding love and care of their fellow human beings. It is the duty of family members and young generation to see that they do not spend the twilight years of their life in isolation, pain and misery. Older persons are, therefore, in need of vital support to maintain over-all quality of life.

II. Material and methods

A descriptive study was conducted during 2018 - 2019 in urban and rural areas of Muzaffarpur District. A randomized population of 540 elderly (270- from urban and 270-from rural) of both the gender, under the age group of 60-74, 75-84 and 85 & above were selected by snow ball technique. Data was collected through exploratory and interview research methods. Individually administered questionnaire consisted of personal information schedule to elicit auxiliary information of the subjects regarding demographic variables, Old-age Adjustment Inventory Scale by Hussain and Kaur (1995) to assess the adjustment pattern of rural and urban elderly, Attitudes toward old people scale by Kogan was used to assess the family members attitude towards elderly and Socio Economic Status Scale by Aggarwal *et al*, (2005) was employed to assess the SES of the family. Elderly were personally contacted in their family and were briefed about the purpose of the study and then they were interviewed. They were asked to follow the instructions given in the questionnaire before filling information. The caregiver's opinion was also sought to assess their attitude towards elderly and in order to substantiate the responses given by the elderly regarding adjustment pattern. The duration of each interview was about 60-120 minutes. Each questionnaire has been given in English and Hindi languages to elicit clear answers. Some of the educated respondents filled the questionnaire by themselves where as information from illiterate respondents was gathered through personal interview method by the researcher. Differential design was used to compare the difference in adjustment pattern among rural and urban elderly and correlation research design was employed to test the relation between attitudes of the children and adjustment pattern among rural and urban elderly.

III. Results and discussion

Table 1. Comparison of adjustment pattern among rural and urban male elderly

Adjustment area	Rural male (N=135)		Urban male (N=135)		t-test
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Health	13.10	4.82	18.43	4.47	9.40**
Home	17.52	4.34	20.73	3.83	6.44**
Social	16.53	2.62	18.05	2.64	4.75**
Marital	11.59	1.83	13.01	2.13	5.87**
Emotional	12.82	4.35	15.65	5.35	4.76**
Financial	8.79	2.05	10.64	2.78	6.19**
Overall adjustment	81.76	18.63	96.51	17.36	6.72**

** $p \leq 0.01$ level of significance

Adjustment among rural and urban male elderly is represented in Table 1. The 't' scores of adjustment among rural and urban male elderly in the areas of health (9.40), home (6.44), social (4.75), marital (5.87), emotional (4.76), financial (6.19) and overall adjustment (6.72) showed significant difference, indicating better adjustment of urban male elderly in all the areas as compared to their rural male counterparts. These results are in favour of the findings reported in the research studies of Rafiq *et al.* (2006) who reported that there was a significant difference in home and financial adjustment among rural and urban respondents which indicated that urban respondents are highly adjusted in the financial and home area as compared to rural respondents. Shukla *et al.* (2013) who reported that subjective happiness among male elderly staying in urban areas was high in comparison to male elderly staying in rural areas.

Table 2. Comparison of adjustment pattern among rural and urban female elderly

Adjustment area	Rural female (N=135)		Urban female (N=135)		t-test
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Health	13.56	5.39	18.39	4.62	7.90**
Home	18.68	4.00	21.25	3.45	5.65**
Social	15.76	3.19	18.01	3.11	5.88**
Marital	8.66	2.03	9.81	2.81	3.83**
Emotional	12.93	4.51	15.87	4.46	5.39**
Financial	8.47	2.30	10.40	2.48	6.59**
Overall adjustment	78.05	18.58	93.73	16.05	7.41**

** $p \leq 0.01$ level of significance

Table 2 illustrates adjustment pattern among rural and urban female elderly. It is clear from the table that, there was significant difference between rural and urban female elderly in the adjustment areas such as health (7.90), home (5.65), social (5.88), marital (3.83), emotional (5.39), financial (6.59) and overall adjustment (7.41). Urban female elderly showed better adjustment in all the areas than their rural female counterparts. These findings are in agreement with the inferences drawn in the study of Ramamurti (2003) who stated that the health has been found to be poor among rural women as compared to their urban counterparts.

Table 3. Comparison of adjustment pattern among rural male and female elderly

Adjustment area	Rural male (N=135)		Rural female (N=135)		t-test
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Health	13.10	4.82	13.56	5.39	0.72 ^{NS}
Home	17.52	4.34	18.68	4.00	2.28*
Social	16.53	2.62	15.76	3.19	2.16*
Marital	11.59	1.82	8.66	2.03	12.45**
Emotional	12.82	4.35	12.93	4.51	0.19 ^{NS}
Financial	8.79	2.05	8.47	2.30	1.19 ^{NS}
Overall adjustment	81.76	18.63	78.05	18.58	1.63 ^{NS}

* $p \leq 0.05$ level of significance,

NS-Non significant

** $p \leq 0.01$ level of significance

Table 3 clearly represents, significant difference between rural male and female elderly in different areas of adjustment such as home (2.28), social (2.16) and marital (12.45) respectively. In social and marital

adjustment area, rural male elderly had better adjustment, whereas in case of home area rural female elderly showed better adjustment than their rural male counterparts. Non significant difference was found in areas of health, emotional, financial and overall adjustment. These findings are in line with the findings of Punia and Punia (2002) who reported that there was significant difference between male and female wherein males were better adjusted than females in the social, marital and emotional areas of adjustment. Similarly Rafiq *et al.* (2006) showed that old age females had better adjustment than that of old age males. There was a significant difference between rural male and females in the areas of adjustment like marital, emotional, financial and overall adjustment. The adjustment in these areas was better among rural males as compared to rural females. Gulzar *et al.* (2008) study findings showed that old age affects males and females differently in terms of social adjustment. During old age as male respondents were found to be more socially adjusted than female respondents. Shukla *et al.* (2013) reported that, subjective happiness among rural male elderly found to be better than female elderly ($\mu=19.9$). Nair and Joseph(2013) highlighted that men had significantly higher scores in all areas of adjustment *viz.*, health, home, social, marital, emotional and financial than females. The study pointed out that as males are in a better position than females in financial, social and cultural aspects of adjustments.

Adjustment among urban male and female elderly is indicated in Table 4. From the table it is clear that there is no much variation in the mean scores of all the areas of adjustment except in marital adjustment of urban male and female elderly. Significant difference was found between urban male and female elderly with respect to their marital adjustment (10.51). Indicating better marital adjustment among urban male elderly than urban female elderly. Whereas non-significant difference was noticed in the areas such as health, home, social, emotional, financial and overall adjustment. Results are supported by Zoengpari and Singh's study (2005) which showed significant better marital adjustment in males than females. Similarly Rafiq *et al.* (2006) study revealed that there was a significant difference between urban male and females on various areas of adjustment. Urban males are better adjusted as compared to urban females in all the areas of adjustment. Bhattacharya and Mukherjee (2013)'s study results revealed that male elderly were better adjusted in comparison with the female elderly.

Table 4. Comparison of adjustment pattern among urban male and female elderly

Adjustment area	Rural male (N=135)		Urban female (N=135)		t-test
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Health	18.43	4.47	18.39	4.62	0.08 ^{NS}
Home	20.73	3.83	21.25	3.45	1.16 ^{NS}
Social	18.05	2.64	18.01	3.11	0.10 ^{NS}
Marital	13.01	2.13	9.81	2.81	10.51 ^{**}
Emotional	15.65	5.35	15.87	4.46	0.37 ^{NS}
Financial	10.64	2.78	10.40	2.48	0.73 ^{NS}
Overall adjustment	96.51	17.36	93.73	16.05	1.36 ^{NS}

** $p \leq 0.01$ level of significance, NS-Non significant

Relationship between areas of adjustment and family member's attitude towards elderly is depicted in Table 5. It is clear from the table that, attitude of the family member had positive and significant relationship with the adjustment of elderly in the areas such as home ($r=0.125$), social ($r=0.121$), marital ($r=0.126$), financial ($r=0.121$) and overall adjustment ($r=0.117$). Whereas overall attitude of family member was positively but non-significantly related with elderly's health adjustment ($r=0.084$) and emotional adjustment ($r=0.078$) respectively. Indicating positive the attitude of family member's towards their elderly, better is the adjustment in the areas like home, social, marital, financial and overall adjustment of the elderly. These results

are in line with the results reported in the research studies of Soniya Devi and Singh (2012) who investigated that the major responsibility of care giving is taken by the spouse, while the other major caregivers are their daughters and sons, domestic helpers, the elderly themselves and daughters-in-law. A very little proportion of the elderly is looked after by relatives and neighbours. Mamatha and Lata (2014) showed significant relation between family environment and adjustment indicating that better the family environment better the adjustment of retired senior citizens. Study also revealed that the retired senior citizens were getting monthly pension and were not economically dependent on other family members as well as had good relationship with family members which might have resulted in better adjustment. It has been observed that the elderly are provided with adequate care and support mainly by their family.

Table 5. Correlation between areas of adjustment and family member's attitude towards elderly

Area of adjustment	Overall attitude ('r' values)
Health	0.084
Home	0.125**
Social	0.121**
Marital	0.126**
Emotional	0.078
Financial	0.121**
Overall adjustment	0.117**

**p ≤ 0.01 level of significance

Results showed that 58.50 percent of rural elderly belonged to lower middle SES and 47.40 percent of the urban elderly belonged to upper middle SES. Significant difference was found between urban and rural male elderly on health (9.40), home (6.44), social (4.75), marital (5.87), emotional (4.76), financial (6.19) and overall adjustment (6.72) areas. Urban male elderly showed better adjustment in all the areas as compared to rural male counterparts. Similarly urban female elderly had better adjustment in all the areas than their rural female counterparts. With respect to gender significant difference was found between rural male and female elderly adjustment in the areas of home (2.28), social (2.16) and marital (12.45) respectively. Rural male elderly had better social and marital adjustment, whereas rural female elderly showed better home adjustment. Significant difference was found between urban male and female elderly with respect to their marital adjustment (10.51).

IV. Conclusion

The present study revealed significant difference between rural and urban male elderly with respect to their areas of adjustment. Urban male elderly showed better adjustment in all the areas as compared to their rural counterparts. Similarly urban female elderly had better adjustment in all the areas than their rural female counterparts. Significant difference was found between rural male and female elderly adjustment in the area of home, social and marital. Rural male elderly had better social and marital adjustment while rural female elderly showed better home adjustment. Significant difference was found between urban male and female elderly with respect to their marital adjustment. Indicating better marital adjustment among urban male elderly than urban female elderly. Relationship between areas of adjustment and family member's attitude towards elderly found to be positive and significant in the areas like home, social, marital, financial and overall adjustment. Indicating positive the attitude of family member's towards their elderly, better is the elderly adjustment in the areas like home, social, marital, financial and overall adjustment.

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