
Study on Happiness and Life Satisfaction among Elderly Ernakulam District, Kerala.

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ABSTRACT

"A phenomenological study to assess the happiness and life satisfaction among elderly in Ernakulam district".

Aim: -To assess the happiness and life satisfaction among elderly.

Materials and Method: - A phenomenological study was conducted among 15 senior citizens at Ernakulam district. The data saturation was attained with the interview. Data collection tool comprised of socio demographic Performa and lead questions for in-depth interview. The interview was audiotaped, coded, transcribed and translated into English. Themes and sub themes were derived. The major themes derived from study were current quality of life, internal and external support, daily activities and hobbies and spiritual needs. The study findings showed that majority of the elderly had good quality life. Five of them are engaged in house hold activities, four of them are actively participated in agriculture activities, three of them participated in leisure activities and majority of them have enough spiritual belief.

INTRODUCTION

Ageing is a natural process which is inevitable and thus being the end of the human life cycle. Perceiving ageing with fear is recent phenomenon, it seems to be increasing each day, as world become more complex and moreover ageing is associated with decline in functional ability which affects all aged peoples.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- 1) A study to assess the effect of healthy lifestyle educational programmes on happiness and life satisfaction in the elderly. The study was conducted by Mohammed Mehr. The method used was randomized controlled trial. The number of samples collected were 60. The result shows lifestyle education programme improved happiness scores from 36.80 to 43.11 and life satisfaction scores from 12.96 to 16.02.
- 2) A study to assess the relationship between physical activity and life satisfaction and happiness among young middle aged and older adults. In this study a total of 2345 healthy adults were recruited. The result shows life satisfaction and happiness increased with increasing age. The results support the promotion of physical activity.
- 3) A study to assess the happiness and congruence in older adulthood. The study was conducted by A J Bishop and P Martin. A sample of 320 older adults were taken. The result supports relationship between social resources and subjective wellbeing in later life.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Data collection was done as a part of add on course on geriatric care. The data was collected from 10 elderly persons at Ernakulam district. The data was collected after obtaining consent

from the participants. Questions were asked and was allowed to talk freely about their life experience. Language of communication was Malayalam and English. Recording was done through video call recordings

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Theme 1: Current Quality Of Life

1.1 Living in good quality

- Participant 1: “Yes, I am happy with my family”.
- Participant 2: “With God’s grace , I am in a good finance condition”.
- Participant 5: “So far living a comfortable life”.
- Participant 7: “Yeah! As long as I am healthy , I am having a better life, dear”.
- Participant 8: “Even though I have faced lot of struggles , Now i am happy with my life”.
- Participant 9: “Yes, I am leading a peaceful life”.
- Participant 10: “I have no complaints regarding my life. I am happy”.
- Participant 12: “Well...I am satisfied with my life. So far so good. What about you , my dear?”

1.2 Not so satisfied with life

- Participant 3: “I had many hardships in my life and I’m still going through this”.
- Participant 4: “I am alone, My dear. That’s my only sorrow”.
- Participant 6: “I could have lived a better life”.
- Participant 11: “I wish i could live with my children”.

Theme 2: Internal And External Support

1.1 Support from family, friends and neighbors

- Participant 1: “Mmmm... I stay with my younger son, his wife and children. They take care of me. “
- Participant 3: “Sometimes I call my friends through telephone. “
- Participant 7: “I talk with my neighbors regularly. “
- Participant 9: “My son is there for all my needs”.
- Participant 12: “My daughter is a nurse. She takes care of me”.

1.2 Support from health professionals

- Participant 1: “I go for regular medical checkup in the nearby hospital. “
- Participant 4: “Mmm... No, I can’t go to hospital as I have difficulty in walking. “
- Participant 8: “I am frequently visited by the palliative care unit “.
- Participant 10: “Since hospital is near my home, i use go there to check by Bp sometimes”.

1.3 Comfortable living environment

- Participant 1: “I have my own room with all necessary facilities. “
- Participant 4 : “Mmm... I want to have a walker but now I use a stick. “
- Participant 6: “Some days I live with my daughter and some days I live with my elder son. These changes are a bit uncomfortable for me. “
- Participant 11: “It would be very helpful, if the vehicle could arrive at doorstep”.

Theme 3: Daily Activities and Hobbies

1.1 Household activities

- Participant 2: “I help her in household chores as I can”.
- Participant 5: “I don’t like to sit simply, so I do household chores”.
- Participant 7: “I always like to be engaged in any activities, most probably in kitchen”.
- Participant 9: “When everyone goes to work, I do the household chores”.
- Participant 12: “I am having joint pain, still I manage to do household activities”.

1.2 Leisure activities

- Participant 3: “I like to watch serial. Most probably at night time”.
- Participant 6: “Every morning i need to read newspaper”.
- Participant 8: “I usually go to junction to chit chat with my friends”.

1.3 Agriculture and farming

- Participant 1: “I have cattle rearing”.
- Participant 4: “We have paddy field and we are cultivating it”.
- Participant 10: “I usually spent my day in our agriculture field”.
- Participant 11: “Vegetables we need are cultivated in our courtyard”.

Theme 4: Spiritual Needs

1.1 Have enough spiritual beliefs

- Participant 1: “Ah, i have belief like everyone else”.
- Participant 4: “I need to go to church every Sunday”.
- Participant 5: “Almighty is the greatest support of my life”.
- Participant 8: “I had many difficulties which i has overcome by prayers”.
- Participant 10: “Majority of time, i pray alone”.
- Participant 12: “My only prayer is to be in heaven”.
- Participant 2: “I pray daily”.
- Participant 8: “God helped me in many of my obstacles.

RESULTS

Theme 1: current quality of life

1.1 Living in good quality

1.2 Not so satisfied with the life

Theme 2 : Internal and external support

1.1 Support from family friends and neighbours

1.2 Support from help professionals

1.3 Comfortable living environment

Theme 3: Daily activities and hobbies

1.1 Household activities

1.2vLeisure activities

1.3 Agriculture and farming

Theme 4 :Spiritual needs

1.1 Have enough spiritual beliefs

DISCUSSION

Research on happiness and life satisfaction among the elderly is a crucial aspect of understanding the well-being of older adults. A study in India revealed that older adults experience higher life satisfaction, contradicting the belief that this association only exists in high-income nations ¹.

The study found that older men reported higher life satisfaction than older women, but when other factors were considered, older women reported higher life satisfaction ¹. Additionally, older adults with higher social castes and secondary or higher education reported higher life satisfaction ¹.

The top three predictors of life satisfaction were satisfaction with living arrangements, perceived discrimination and self-rated health ¹. The study also highlighted that older adult with higher life satisfaction reported healthy behaviors, which translated to better overall health ¹.

However, it's important to note that maintaining higher levels of life satisfaction can be challenging with advancing age, social, physical and mental health challenges ¹. Therefore, understanding the factors that contribute to life satisfaction is essential for creating policies and programs that improve the quality of life for older adults ¹.

Key Factors Associated with Life Satisfaction in Older Adults

- Satisfaction with living arrangements
- Perceived discrimination
- Self-rated health
- Social relationships
- Social engagement
- Education
- Income
- Caste
- Religion
- Health behaviors
- Health conditions
- Healthcare

These factors are crucial in understanding the complexities of life satisfaction among older adults and can inform policies and programs aimed at improving their well-being ¹.

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