

Socio-emotional and Psychological Problems of Retired Elderly in Haryana: A Comprehensive View

Darshana Punia and Shakuntala Punia

INTRODUCTION

Ageing is a phase of life and a biological process. Every organism that is born must aged with time and decay. Human concern about the phenomenon of ageing is very old. During the last few decades there has been a marked upsurge of interest in the problems of ageing. The objective of modern research on ageing are to make life in the last stages of human existence pleasant and liveable (Douglas, 1980). All living species go through a somewhat similar biological cycle. Variation occur between species with respect to the exact shape of the curve of risk, peak and decline (Mckinney et al., 1976).

There is not always a progression from good health and active mental life to chronic illness and senility. Most people remain vigorous and active until the end of long life. The way people take the stress and strain of living has something to do with the wearing out of mind and body (Havinghurst and Albrecht, 1953). One of the major concerns in old people is how adjust well to their retirement i.e. sudden break of active life to the inactive life. The process of adjustment to the new environment can be a very demanding and even unsettling one and there is some impressionistic evidence that the first year or two following retirement has a high risk of sickness, depression, heart attack and even mortality (Chaudhry, 1992).

The process of adjustment to retirement is greatly affected by the gender to which the retiree belongs (Hurlock, 1976). A host of problems confront an individual at the time of retirement, mainly loss of status, lowering of income, reorganization of life activities, social isolation and a changing definition of self (Cox, 1984). Certain theoretical views explain that ageing could be managed successfully after retirement (Cumming and Henry, 1961; Palmere, 1968; Erikson, 1959). Also the hemistich model provides an overview of how personal and situational factors influence the appraisal after retirement (Reis and Croid, 1993).

All this bring us to the conclusion that since ageing is a normal process, we not only can equip ourselves to cope with it, when it comes but can also enjoy the opportunities and challenges it presents. The findings of this study may help the government and private agencies to tackle the problem of all kinds and made ageing a more charming choice and healthy routine. So, the present study is an attempt made in this direction with the specific objective: To find out the types and extent of problems faced by old people.

Hypothesis: There will be no gender differences in the problems faced by old males and females.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The participants were retired old men and women (above 58 years) from Hisar, Bhiwani and Sirsa districts of Haryana state, covering whole of Bagar pocket. A sample of 80 people from each district city participated in the study, finally 240 elderly constituted the sample.

A personal interview schedule was administered to the sample of retired personnel to obtain socio-demographic information. A higher proportion of the respondents were of 58 to 67 yrs of age group and had education upto post graduation level. A majority of families possessed medium and low socioeconomic status. More than fifty per cent of the selected respondent had large family size and had a monthly income range of Rs. 3000 to 6000.

Measure: Personal interview schedule and a standardized old age adjustment problem inventory (Husain and Kaur, 1995) were used to gather information on family demography and different types of problems faced by old people. This inventory measures the following areas:

(a) Health (b) Home (c) Social (d) Marital (e) Emotional (F) Financial. The respondents were asked to tick 'Yes' or 'No' for all 125 statements. The scoring is done according to the scoring instructions provided in the manual. Higher the

score, more the problems.

The statistical analysis for measuring the type and extent of the problems of the elderly were frequency and percentage and for differences in the problems faced by old male and old female, the 'Z' value was calculated.

RESULTS

The data in table 1 indicated that severe problems were faced by 57.5 per cent of males and females followed by 35.8 per cent who experienced moderate problems. When data were taken comparatively, it was very clear that more females (35.0 and 62.5% respectively) than males (36.6% and 53.6% respectively) had moderate and severe problems.

Table 1: Problems faced by old males and old females

Levels of problems	Male	Female	Total
Mild	13(10.8)	03.(02.5)	16(06.7)
Moderate	44(36.6)	42(35.0)	86(35.8)
Severe	63(53.6)	75(62.5)	138(57.5)

Figure in parenthesis indicate percentages.

Socio-emotional Problems: The problems faced by old people, both males and females are presented in table 2. A higher proportion of old people (77.08%) faced made, none of the females represented mild social problems. While 10.8% of old males faced mild social problems indicates that old females having greater appreciation to the social problem in comparison to their counter-

Table 2: Socio-emotional problems faced by old males and females

Levels of problems	Male	Female	Total
<i>Social</i>			
Mild	13(10.8)	00(00.0)	13(05.42)
Moderate	89(74.2)	86(80.0)	185(77.08)
Severe	18(15.0)	24(20.0)	42(17.05)
<i>Emotional</i>			
Mild	73(06.9)	62(51.6)	135(56.28)
Moderate	38(31.6)	44(36.6)	82(34.16)
Severe	09(07.5)	14(11.8)	23(09.58)
<i>Marital</i>			
Mild	42(35.0)	08(06.7)	50(20.8)
Moderate	57(47.5)	82(68.3)	139(57.9)
Severe	21(17.5)	30(25.0)	51(21.3)

Figure in parenthesis indicate percentages.

parts. Higher proportion of females (80.00%), as compared to males (74.2%) faced moderate social problems. A few males are facing severe degree of social problems in comparison to females so it can be said that females faced more social problems than males as they fell only in the moderate and severe category.

The table further points out that emotional problems constitute a small part of old age problems as most of the males and females had mild degree of emotional problems (60.9 and 51.6 per cent). Marital problems as reported by the old were more as a larger percentage of males and females were in the moderate and severe category (57.9 and 21.3 per cent). When sex wise data were compared, a higher percentage of females than males had moderate and severe problems. Conclusively, it can be said that females faced more problems than males and that social and marital problems were more severe than emotional problems.

The 'Z' value for intergender differences in the problems faced by old men and women are described in table 3. The perusal of results show that regarding the social and emotional problems, mean scores of men and women show negligible differences, wherein, scores of women were found to be slightly higher than their counterparts. The differences for both social and emotional problems were insignificant.

Table 3: The 'Z' value for intergender differences

Problems	Male Mean	Female Mean	'Z' value
Social	10.60	10.49	1.09
Emotional	03.48	03.85	1.36
Marital	06.30	07.50	3.43**
Overall	20.38	22.34	0.03

Significant at 0.01 per cent level.

The mean scores of females (M= 7.50) for marital problems were found to be higher than male's (M=6.30) marital problems. These differences statistically were found significant as 'Z' calculated value for marital problems was 3.43** which is more than 'Z' tabulated. Further probing the data for overall problems faced by males and females in the Table highlights that no significant differences were found but a comparison of means indicates slightly higher problems in females (M=22.34) than males (M=20.38).

Therefore it can be concluded that females had more problems in all areas than males.

DISCUSSION

Results of the present study indicate the differences in the different types of problems faced by old males and old females. The women respondents in this study faced more marital problems than the men. This finding also got support from the study of Justive (1984). The author reported that the death of spouse is a set back in maintaining status in the family more so in aged females than males. The reason behind this may be that since they are unable to find a member in the house who can relate to their problems or even has time enough to listen them and discuss their problems. Because in the changing times the younger generation (both son and daughter in law) are also in service. So they have no time to look after and to sit and share their feelings with their parents. The results further divulged that in comparison to males, the women respondents were having more social and emotional problems. This is due to the fact that in Indian society, the women have been treated as second citizen and she does not have saved money. Further females are less engaged in social organizations like the village panchayat, co-operative, town library and politics etc. Joseph (1988) also reported that as the individual becomes old, his social interaction shrinks in its scope in a hurry. They don't aspire much interaction with the old because there were certain constraints such as the availability of audiovisual facilities of the letter and the differences in ideologies and moreover in majority of the cases, the social relationship between the young and the old was not cordial.

Prasad (1991) also gives the same results. He studied that the problems of the aged have arisen due to break down of traditional social network and changing value system. The processes of industrialization, urbanization and individualization have completely altered the pattern of relationships in the societies. The other explanation might be, as indicated by Dev (1993) that psychological violence was a fairly new phenomenon. When the visitors come the old were showed into a room at the back as age had become an embarrassment, an ugly eyesore to the young.

The aged were respected on occasions, but in every day life were ignored and abused. Kurian (1972) and Rao (19975) studied the emotional problems of the aged and stated that there have been any changes in the tradition position of the old people in India. He also pointed out that emotional security of the aged was not given adequate consideration and thus loneliness was one of the sad feature found more in aged women than men.

In conclusion, compared to retired males, retired females faced more problems in old age and this may be possible due to the fact that her medical needs are also given second priority. In the joint family system, she faces psychological pressure and hostile feelings from the daughter-in-law as the control of family moves from her to the daughter-in-law. By nature the female is more submissive and after initial squirmishes adjust even though unwillingly in most cases. The male on the other hand, has been the main wage earner and has enjoyed the position of supreme dominance in the house and — does not face these problems. The finding of this study are also in consistent with previous research in India by Maddox (1974) and Hurlock (1976) who reported that the process of adjustment of retirement is greatly affected by gender to which the retiree belongs. One author, Majumdar (1985) conducted a survey on the elderly in New Delhi and found that after retirement there is feeling among the aged that every one's attitude toward them has changed. The old people felt lonely and perceived avoid in their life. All most all had financial problems perceived a loss of status accompanied by a sense of alienation and hopelessness. There is a need for counselling of old as well as the second generation to make relations more cordial.

KEY WORDS Ageing. Social. Emotional and Psychological. Adjustment. Problems.

ABSTRACT Two hundred and forty retired old men and women belonging to two generations drawn by a random sample of households of the urban areas of Haryana state participated in the present study. A questionnaire and an old age adjustment problem inventory were used to gather information on family demography and different types of old age problems. The results of this study indicated that old females faced more problems than old males.

REFERENCES

- Chaudhry, P.: *Ageing and the Aged*. Inter-India Publications, New Delhi (1982).

- Cox, H.: *Later Life: The Relatives of Aging*. Prentice-Hall, Inc., New Jersey (1984).
- Cumming, E. and Henry, W. E.: *Growing Old*. Basic Books, New York (1961).
- Dev, P.K.: Changing aspect of the family. *Women's Era*, 25-27 (1993).
- Douglas, C.K.: *Adulthood and Ageing*. John Wiley and Sons, Canada (1980).
- Havinghurst, R.J. and Albrecht, R.: *Older People*. Longmans, Green & Co., New York (1953).
- Hurlock, E.: *Developmental Psychology. A life Span Approach*, McGraw-Hill. Inc., New York (1976).
- Hurlock, E.: Old people. *J. Family Welfare*, 25(5): 27-28 (1976).
- Joseph, C.: Interaction between old and young. *J. Social Welfare*, 35 (6): 17-19 (1988).
- Justive, K.: Problems of widowed persons *J. Gerontology*, 43(4): 490-493 (1984).
- Kurian and Rao, B.S.: Old age can be made happy. *Social Welfare*, 21(2): 9-10 (1975).
- Maddox, P.: The problems of retired persons. *J. Social Action*, 30(7): 20-213 (1974).
- Majumdar, C.: The end of the road. *The Hindustan Times*. Sunday Magazine, Oct. 6, New Delhi (1985).
- McKinney, F., Lorion, R.P. and Gupta, D.: *Effective Behaviour and Human Development*. Macmillan Publishing Co. Inc., New York, (1976).
- Prasad, Rajeshwar: Reflection on the problems of the aged in India. *Indian Journal of Social Research*, 32(4): 387-91 (1981).
- Reis, M. and Crold, D.P.: Retirement, personality and life satisfaction : A review and two models. *J. Applied Gerontology*, 12(2): 261-282 (1993).

Authors' Address: Darshana Punia and Shakuntala Punia, Department of Child Development College of Home Science, CCS Haryana Agricultural University, Hisar 125 004, Haryana, India