

Adjustment Problems During Senescence

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ABSTRACT The present study examines the adjustment problems of working and non-working aged males after retirement. A group of 100 respondents were selected from Kurukshetra (Haryana) and its surrounding areas ranging in age from 60-65 years. Sample was further divided into two categories and each category consisted of 50 respondents of working and non-working aged males. Old Age Adjustment Inventory (Hussain and Kaur, 1995) was employed to assess the adjustment problems. Analysis revealed significant differences between working and non-working aged males for health, home, social, emotional and financial adjustment problems but non-significant for marital adjustment problems.

INTRODUCTION

Down the ages, people have viewed the eve of life as difficult period. Body and mind slows and usefulness decreases. Some cultures put premium on experience and shower respect for sagacity. Despite high amount of variability on this aspect, old age is marked as onset of depletion of strength. Middle class has been found to be prone to more problems during senescence and management is poor at the individual, family and societal levels.

The present research was undertaken to understand the dynamics of adjustment during senescence among working and non-working males of Kurukshetra and surrounding areas of Haryana State. This area is marked with accentuated levels of religiosity because of its association with legendary Mahabharata war and the gospel of Gita as enunciated by Lord Krishna. This essentially helps management of pain with special reference to want and helplessness. An attempt has been made in this paper to analyse the problems of aged males with the following objectives:-

1. To study the physical, socio-emotional, marital and economic adjustment problems of aged males.

2. To compare the adjustment problems of working and non-working aged males after retirement.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The purposive sampling was adopted for present study. The sample consisted of 100 males of 60-65 years of age with equal number of working and non-working aged males. The study was conducted in Kurukshetra town of Haryana state and its surrounding areas. The old age adjustment inventory (Hussain and Kaur, 1995) was employed to assess the adjustment problems faced by aged males in health, home, social, marital, emotional and financial areas.

All the respondents were personally approached and were explained the purpose of the visit. They were assured that the information given by them would be kept strictly confidential. The responses given by the respondents were scored in all areas of adjustment with the help of scoring keys given in the inventory. The sum of scores in different areas provide measure of over all adjustment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The profile of the sampled working and non-working aged men is given in table 1. Results reveal that majority of respondents had severe health, home, socio-emotional, marital and financial adjustment problems followed by moderate and mild level. Significant difference were found between the two groups regarding health, home, socio-emotional and financial adjustment but non-significant differences were found for marital adjustment. Poor health adjustment of working and non-working old males is due to lack of adequate nutrition, financial constraints for proper medical treatment, lack of time and awareness about personal care. Sometimes elderly

Table 1: Level of adjustment problems and comparison of mean scores of working and non-working aged males

Class	Severe	Moderate	Mild	Mean scores $\pm$ S.D.	Z Score
<i>Health Adjustment</i>					
Working	22 (44)	15 (30)	13 (26)	15.76 $\pm$ 4.28	2.88*
Non-working	21 (42)	15 (30)	14 (28)	18.14 $\pm$ 3.97	
Total	43 (43)	30 (30)	27 (27)		
<i>Home Adjustment</i>					
Working	20 (40)	16 (32)	14 (28)	17.42 $\pm$ 3.79	3.81*
Non-working	19 (38)	16 (32)	15 (30)	20.06 $\pm$ 3.10	
Total	39 (39)	32 (32)	29 (29)		
<i>Social Adjustment</i>					
Working	21 (42)	16 (32)	13 (26)	12.76 $\pm$ 3.09	4.25*
Non-working	20 (40)	16 (32)	14 (28)	15.26 $\pm$ 2.78	
Total	41 (41)	32 (32)	27 (27)		
<i>Marital Adjustment</i>					
Working	21 (42)	16 (32)	13 (26)	11.24 $\pm$ 2.67	1.19
Non-working	21 (42)	15 (30)	14 (28)	11.88 $\pm$ 2.70	
Total	42 (42)	31 (31)	27 (27)		
<i>Emotional Adjustment</i>					
Working	22 (44)	15 (30)	13 (26)	13.44 $\pm$ 4.06	3.85*
Non-working	20 (40)	16 (32)	14 (28)	16.22 $\pm$ 3.10	
Total	42 (42)	31 (31)	27 (27)		
<i>Financial Adjustment</i>					
Working	21 (42)	16 (32)	13 (26)	8.52 $\pm$ 2.16	4.1*
Non-working	20 (40)	16 (32)	14 (28)	10.34 $\pm$ 2.07	
Total	41 (41)	32 (32)	27 (27)		

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage.

* Significant difference between adjustment problems of working and non-working aged males at 5 percent level.

males were so devoted to their work that they neglect even their nutritional needs. Stress caused by worries, tension and responsibilities affected the general well being of working aged males. Dementia and chronic headaches were common problems. Lack of faith in alternative systems of medicine and certain practitioners caused panic. Non-working aged males were better home adjusted as compared to the working aged males. They had better adjustment with their members of the family. They had sufficient time to participate actively in domestic activities. They show care and responsibility towards their family members. They can also help in the household work. They love their grand children and give advice to their children. They found more respect from their family members. Whereas working aged are busy in their own work. Similar findings were reported by Ananthraman (1980) who conducted a study on non-institutionalized old people. He compared the effects of living with one's chil-

dren on the adjustment, activity and self perceived health of elderly men. The results showed that those living with their children were better adjusted and were more active. The non-working aged males had better social adjustment in comparison to working aged males. Non-working people enjoyed more freedom for socialization and consequent good relations with friends. They share each other's problems. Similar findings were reported by Mishra (1993) that majority (49.13 %) of the older males were having high level of interaction with their friends and neighbors. They were meeting quite often through mutual visit or planned visits to common places. The working and non-working aged had the opinion that their life is almost meaningless without their life partners. In old age spouses come closer. They care and share feelings. According to them their life is incomplete without spouse. They become more understandable to each other in old age. In old age, there was a feeling among work-

ing and non-working aged males that everyone's attitude towards them has changed. They were considered as burden on their family and society. There was diminished care and attention by their own sons and daughters-in-law. Their suggestions were not appreciated which was seen as interference. They felt lonely and neglected because nobody had the time to sit with them and to listen to them. All these emotionally disturbing influences affected the aged and they suffered from psychological trauma like death of near or dear ones, fear of death and disappointments. Most aged silently pray for an early end of their lives. The findings of this study are also supported by Majumdar (1985) who found that after retirement there is a feeling among aged that everyone's attitude towards them had changed. The reason for their financial problems may be due to less of savings, more expenditure and limited sources of income. They do not have separate sources of income in their old age. They were mainly dependent upon their family members for meeting their economic needs. Their earning capacity decreases and hence care taker becomes care seeker. Soodan (1975) reported that aged were mainly dependent upon others for meeting their economic needs. The majority of them were from lower socio-economic classes. Lower the class, higher the financial problems.

On the basis of above findings it can be concluded that significant differences exist between working and non-working aged males for health, home, social, emotional and financial adjustment problems, but non-significant differences were found for marital adjustment problems. The findings indicated that aged males suffer from severe health problems due to lack of adequate nutrition, lack of money for getting proper treatment, lack of time and awareness about personal care. Elderly felt lonely in their house as family members are busy in their own work. Aged had the feeling that their life is almost meaningless without spouses. They suffered from social losses. Elderly face emotional problems due to lack of care and attention by their own sons and daughters. They also face financial problems due to less savings, more expenditure and limited sources of income.

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