

Impact of living condition on depression and happiness



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Summary

Now-a-days Bangladesh is witnessing a rapid increase of old people. This increase is the result of many factors such as increase in age, longevity and decreased death rates due to advancement in the field of medicine, improvement of life expectancy and enhancement in the average span of life. As a result of increasing number of nuclear families it has become a question which place is more comfortable for old people, Old home or family. The current study aims to know the answer. The study will employ t-test analysis to understand the effect of living condition on depression and happiness among 100 purposively selected Bangladeshi participants who are 60 or more aged. Two scales for depression and life-satisfaction will be used to depict the quantitative data. Successful completion of the study will add a worthy picture of old people of Bangladesh living at home and old home.

Introduction

Bangladesh is a developing country and her economic status is also changing. The changing economic structure has reduced importance of joint families and the dependence of rural families on land. The younger generation shows less sense of duty and obligation toward their older generation. For this reason the number of old people living in old home is increasing. The old generation faces the problem for comfortable accommodation. Their feelings are being neglected. Old age comes with reduced physical ability, mental ability, gradual giving up of socio-economic roles and economic dependency on others. " Old age is called ' Dark' not

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because the light fails to shine but people refuse to see it" (Gowri, 2003).

The life expectancy of Bangladeshi male people is 67. 9 years and for female people is 71. 7 years. Psychologically too, most people in Bangladesh consider themselves old at the chronological age of 60 years.

In Bangladesh like elsewhere, life expectancy has increased for better medical care, proper nutrition, education and family care (kanwor, 1999). So, people are living longer and they constitute a vastly experienced human resource with tremendous potential to contribute to national development. Their well-being is a concern of both the society and nation. The traditional families of Bangladesh provide care to old people. Family is the great source of care for old people. But with globalization, the meaning and role of old age is changing across cultures and within families. Now-a-days, joint families are breaking into nuclear families where most of the time old people are neglected. So, old people are living in old home. Life of old home is not bad but, it is not expected to most of the Bangladeshi people. People go to old home when they don't get care to anyone.

Aging is natural process and causes decline of physical and mental structure. Age sixty is usually considered as beginning of old age. The physical decline occurs due to change of the body cells. Psychological decline occurs because of unfavorable attitudes, no work and uninterested life. Individuals having no interest in life may age sooner than others and become depressed.

Old age requires role change which can be uncomfortable for old people. With less social activities, no work and minimum interpersonal interaction they often lost the meaning of life. Erikson (1963) argued that, in this stage

old people pass life through a conflict between ego integrity and despair. Old people with ego integrity go on to acquire wisdom and accept morality. Those who fall into despair suffer with Kierkegaard referred to as sickness and death. Despairing individual may also become withdrawn and ambivalent or hostile and destructive in old age. As the aging process continues four major categories of needs or problems arise: 1) health, 2) housing, 3) income maintenance and 4) interpersonal relations. Happiness and depression of old people can be determined by adjustment and fulfillment of the four needs.

Depression:

Depression can be characterized as feeling sad, disappointed, blue, helpless, unhappy etc. Most people experience these feelings at one time or another for short periods. But true clinical depression is mood disorder which interferes with everyday life for any long period of time (Benjamin, 2007).

Depression is not a normal part of aging. Common reasons of depression in old people may be losing loved one and have to adjust to living alone. Other causes can be divorce, financial loss, retirement etc. They may be physically ill or unable to be active as they once were.

Happiness:

Research on the happiness of different age groups in the UK has found surprisingly that happiness is actually over 60s. This research showed that happiness levels are quite high in the 20s, then dip through the 30s and reach their lowest point in the mid forties. But after 50, they start to rise and

continue rising through the 60s, when they become even happier than young people.

The participants will be taken from different community context: private home, day-care centers, old-home and residential homes. The present study will concentrate on the effects of living arrangement on happiness and depression of old people. This study will investigate effect of gender on depression and happiness. This study will aware the present generation about their responsibility and roles for old-generation.

Literature review:

A study conducted by Chou and Chi (2001) in a study revealed that old people living in old home have higher level of financial strain, more depression than others.

Antonelli et al. (2002) reveals that some of the respondents reported “ Feeling of insecurity”, “ Loss of dignity” and “ Lack of emotional support” when neglected or ignored by family.

Mahbuba M. N. and Dilruba A. (2003) in a study find that happiness was higher and depression was low in old people living with family than those living in old home. Gender difference did not make any difference there.

Baldwin et al. (2002) & Koeing & Blazer (2004) in a study found that females are at greater risk of developing depression.

Aims:

The aim of this research project is to

- See the effect of living condition on happiness and depression
- See the effect of gender on happiness and depression

Rationale:

The present research is on very serious problem. Understanding happiness and depression of old people for their living condition will be helpful for us to take care of old people more. People will be more careful about their parents. So essential steps will be possible to take for old people and they will be happier.

Method

Research design:

Purposive sampling design.

Sample size and participants:

100 old people will be approached. 50 people will be from old home and another 50 will be from family. Among them 50 will be male and 50 will be female. Participants aged 60 or more and equal sex ratio will be maintained.

Instrument:

Life-Satisfaction Scale of Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin (1985). A 5 items instrument with 7 points, response format ranging from disagree to strongly agree.

The Depression scale is of Md. Zahir Uddin and Muhammad Mahmudur Rahman. The scale is 5 point rating scale consisting 30 items.

Procedure:

Necessary research tools will be prepared first. The researcher will approach to the person to participant in study. The participants will have to fill up the set of questionnaires in paper. Thus all required data will be collected.

Collected data will be coded and analyzed using computer software SPSS and MS Excel.

Data analysis:

A descriptive analysis of the variables will be presented such as depression and life-satisfaction of the respondents by age, sex and living condition.

Then a T-test analysis will be carried out to see the effect of living condition on depression and happiness of old people.