

Effect of Spirituality on Well-Being of Elderly People

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Abstract

It is well known that spirituality is a universal phenomenon. This constructs finds everywhere in the world in every caste, class and religion as well as in all age groups. Even among the people of typical tribes, a deep sense of spiritual orientation is there in the roots. Numerous studies show the positive link between spiritual orientation and well-being of people.

The present study attempts to explore the effect of spirituality on psychological well-being of elderly people of Kanpur city. Fifty participants have randomly been selected as sample for the investigation. Spirituality Attitude Scale (SAS) has been applied to assess the spiritual attitude of the subjects. Ryff scale of psychological well-being was used to find the level of psychological well-being. To see the significant difference between the groups, 't' test was used. To investigate the correlation between spiritual attitude and well-being, Pearson 'r' was applied. Findings revealed that high spiritualistic people possess high level of well-being and subjects who scored low on SAS, having a low level of well-being. It is also found that there is a positive link between spiritual attitude and psychological well-being.

These findings shows that if a person spend some time in spiritual activities as prayer, group spiritual meetings etc., having meaning in their lives. These people have a healthy relation with their young family members. They rarely become anxious and a low rate of fear of death.

Keywords: Psychological Construct, Transcendental Conceptt.

Introduction

It is unavoidable truth that today we are living in the era of which is highly sophisticated, full of competitive tendency and a high level of fear of failure. These traits easily increases our anxiety level which leads frustration. When we are talking about elderly people, who have crossed their age of retirement, if they were working and who were non-working, it is really tough to predict about their mental as well as emotional condition. It is because elderly people are passing through a dilemma about their health, economic dependency, emotional support, spouse care, social activities and so many different conditions.

So, it is important for them to spend some time in any kind of spiritual activity. It is found in many researches that spiritual engagement makes strengthen a person's psychological condition. This sense leads an enhancement of the importance of Positive Psychology today.

Spirituality

We see spirituality as the thread that joins together the pears of the world's religions and as the essence that connects all human beings together. Spirituality is somewhat an umbrella, covering formalized experience as well as individual's transcendental experience. It is a holistic purpose of world's religions. Spirituality is the personal relationship of the person with the Almighty. It is shown in many researches that each sitting of spiritual engagement encouraged people to develop an insight to find a way in the dark deep cave. As Koeing, Larson and Larson (2001), surmise that spirituality-

1. Acts as a social support system
2. Reduces a sense of loss of control and helplessness
3. Provides a cognitive framework that reduces suffering and enhances self esteem
4. Gives confidence that God is everywhere to help

5. Creates a mindset that helps the individual to be relaxed and allow the patients' body to heal it.

Well-Being

It is a fundamental component of health through which one realizes one's own cognitive, affective and relational abilities. As Heider (1997) proposes that well-being is the process of living of one's highest possible level as a whole person. It is actually not a state that is attained, but is an ongoing dynamic and fluid process happens through time and efforts.

Well-being is being happy, achieving self-respect, taking part in community activities, appearing in public gathering without feeling shame. These functions make a person's being and the evaluation of a person's well-being. So, well-being is generally defined as a combination of two factors: high level of positive affect (happiness and satisfaction with life) and low level of negative effect (stress, depression and lack of confidence).

It is revealed in many researches that well-being is an outcome of a complex combination of biological, socio-cultural, psychological, economic and spiritual factors. It is closer to mental health, happiness, life satisfaction and actualization of one's full potential.

Psychological well-being resides within the individual. It is the state of 'feeling' happy and healthy, having satisfaction, pleasure and peace of mind. This feeling may quantify between a range from negative mental state to a state which has been identified as positive mental health.

Spirituality and Well-Being

It is found in many researches that spirituality significantly influence people's quality of life and well-being. It is positively related to family and social support and negatively related to loneliness, (Jang & Kim, 2003). It becomes more significant in elderly people because they face emotional and financial imbalance very frequently. When they spend some time in spiritual activities more often, they are able to cope with such conditions and easily face the sense of loneliness, as they connect their self with the Divine power through spiritual orientation.

If they successfully established meaningful relationships with others as well as with God, it helps to maintain a harmony in body, mind and spirit. They find meaning and purpose in their 2nd inning of life. In many social researches it is revealed that social support is very beneficial to gain a sense of well-being, and spiritual involvement is supposed to be a great source of social support. Regular spiritual engagement may go a long way in helping people to overcome their anxieties. Researches show that when elderly people participate in group spiritual practices, they rarely feel loneliness, because they form a group of people like themselves.

As Maclaren, 2004; Miller & Thoresen, 2003, indicated that spirituality has been important to people in many countries around the world. Pargament & Mahony (2005), have suggested that spirituality induces positive emotional states such as love, adoration, gratitude, a sense of awe and elevation, and humility. It would be more effective in

older people, because they usually feel alone and neglected in their age and spiritual attendance give them a strong sense of moral and Divine support.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the present study was to explore the role of spirituality in well-being of elderly people.

Objectives of the study

1. To find out the level of spirituality of the subjects
2. To study the effect of spirituality on well-being of the subjects
3. To find out the relationship between level of spirituality and well-being

Sample

To examine the impact of spiritual participation in well-being of elderly people, the total sample comprised 50 subjects of Kanpur city. Random selection was applied, so no matter of religion here. Male and female participants were randomly taken. Minimum qualification of the subjects was graduation. Age range was taken 60 to 70 years.

Tools

In the present study, two psychological tests have been used-

Spirituality Attitude Scale(SAS)- The SAS was administered to measure the level of spirituality of the subjects. The tool has been developed by Prof. Akbar Husain, Aligarh Muslim University, 2010.

To measure the level of well-being of the participants, Ryff scale of Psychological Well-being was applied. The scale has been developed by Prof. Carol D. Ryff, University of Wisconsin, 1989.

Procedure

In the present study, to investigate the effect of spiritual participation and spiritual attitude, initially SAS was distributed in the selected population. After collecting the dually filled questionnaire, on the basis of raw scores participants were assigned as the sample and divided into two groups- High and Low spiritualistic group. 25 subjects were fallen in each group. After that all 50 subjects were tested on Ryff scale. Raw scores were assessed with Mean, SD and t test. To find out the correlation between spiritual attitude and well-being, Pearson r was applied on the scores.

Findings

Table 1: Showing Mean & SD of the scores on SAS-

Groups	N	Mean	SD
High Spiritualistic group	25	129.24	10.46
Low Spiritualistic Group	25	104.02	07.78

Table 2: Showing Mean & SD of the scores on Ryff scale

Groups	N	Mean	SD
High spiritual's well-being	25	225	14.02
Low spiritual's well-being	25	192.06	10.22

Table 3: Showing Significant difference between high & low Spiritual's well-being

Groups	N	df	t value	Level of Significance
High Spiritual's Well-being	25	48	3.48	0.01
Low Spiritual's Well-being	25			

Discussion & Conclusion

The values presented here in table 1 show the difference in Mean and SD of the scores of high and low spiritualistic group. Values put on table 2 shows the difference in Mean and SD of both the groups on Well-being. As table 3 reflects 't' value which found significant at 0.01 level of significance. It is indicating here that the group scored high on SAS, also scored high on well-being scale, and in contrast, the subjects carrying low spiritual attitude, also scored low on well-being scale.

The coefficient of Pearson correlation between spiritual attitude and well-being found 0.114. This reflects a positive link between these two constructs.

These findings revealed that people having high spiritual attitude, also possessed an optimal level of psychological well-being. It is also found that people engage in spiritual pursuits, reported generally be happy, cheerful, having peace of mind and easily cope with loneliness. They possess good physical health and feel satisfied with their previous life as well as healthy relationships with the youth members of their family.

Researches shows that spiritual engagement has a positive late life functioning. Well-being found positively predicted by spirituality, experienced through connectedness with the transcendent and through connectedness with others. (Evalyne Thauvoye et.al.2017).

As Mishael F. Steger reported on the basis of her research findings, people who report greater meaning in their 2nd inning of life, they have more beneficial experience of spirituality, and report greater sense of psychological well-being. These people face lesser experience of psychopathology. Many other researches shows that spiritual coping with negative life events, fosters feeling of optimism, hope and meaning, which in turn may speed healing by acting as a buffer against stress.

As Rogers et.al.explored that, age and functionality has a direct effect on physical quality of life and spirituality has a direct effect on mental quality of life. Social support mediated this relationship positively. Social support, health and educational programs in the community, promotes older to improve their quality of life, which further give them a sense of well-being.

Mackenzie, Rajagopal, Meibohm&lavizzo-Mourey(2000), explored that spirituality found a significant influence on the psychological well-being of elders. The subjective experience of spiritual support formed the core of the spirituality-health connection. Most of the elders believed that the Higher power supported them constantly.

As Sara Lima (2020) has explained on the basis of her studies that, spirituality creates an impressive impact on older adults' quality of life, improvement in their health, enhance their knowledge and maintain positive relationship with others.

Generally spirituality can be taken as, most effective coping mechanism. It helps to alleviate pain and distress by providing significance, meaning and purpose to life. It helps to provide psychological benefit in all ways. It is considered that balancing of emotional aspects, harmony with nature and with others- are some important factors to maintain well-being. Spiritual attitude and orientation considered as additional and a very eminent measure for promoting physical, mental and emotional health. This in turn finally leads an overall sense of well-being. Spirituality tends to increase hope and strengthens immunity during later adulthood.

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