



To study the role of social support in attitude towards ageing among elderly people belonging to Rohtak district

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Abstract : Old age/late adulthood is generally begin at about age 65. Erik Erikson suggests that at this time it is important to find meaning and satisfaction in life rather than to become bitter and disillusioned that is to resolve the conflict of integrity versus despairs. If there is a sense of integrity, people feel whole, competent and satisfied with their life choices and achievements. They have accepted setbacks and disappointments and celebrated the successes and found a way to meaning within all these life events. Increased age is associated with greater maturity and well-being. Despairs, on the other hand occurs when seniors feel they have made wrong decisions. They display bitterness, defeat, anxiety and hopelessness about their old age. According to Zastrow, “Senescence affects the different people of different rates. Also the rates of change in various body process affected by ageing vary among people.”

Key Words : Aging, Old Age, Elderly

Introduction :

Aging is a fundamental truth and an inevitable aspect of every living organism in the world. Every country in the world is experiences growth in the number of older persons in their population. Population ageing is poised to become one of the most significant social transformations of the 21st century. It is a global phenomenon. Robert Butler coined the term ageism in 1969.

Social support is the perception and actuality that one is cared for, has assistance available from other people, and that one is a part of a supportive social network. Social support is embedded in the ongoing social interactions that are part of the changing network of social relationships.

Social Support :

ISSN : 2278-6848



© International Journal for Research Publication and Seminar



Social support has been defined as “the existence of availability of people on whom we can rely, people who let us know that they care about value and love us”(Sarason, Levine, Basham, & Sarason,(1983).Thus social support is an interwoven relationship that provide companionship, assistance, attachment of the individual.

Social support as described by Coyne & DeLongis (1986) is a "cognitive appraisal or property of the person, rather than a reflection of a set of circumstances or of the transactional unit of a particular circumstance".

Social support can come from a variety of sources, including: family, friends, romantic partners, pets, community ties, and coworkers but not limited to these. These sources of support can be natural (e.g., family and friends) or may be formal also (e.g., mental health specialists or community organizations). The source of the social support is an important determinant of its effectiveness as a coping strategy. Such support is thought to help to maintain emotional well-being and try to lessen the effects of adverse life events.

Attitude towards Ageing:

Ageing:

Ageing is a global phenomenon. Ageing is a continuous process that begins at conception and ends with death. Robert Butler coined the term ageism in 1969. Ageism may be defined as the prejudice or discrimination that occurs on the basis of age. Older people are easily its target. Human development refers to the series of changes that the individuals characteristically show as they progress in time towards maturity and through adult phase towards old age.

Shrivastava(2010)- “as we become old we wonder whether the life we have lived was worth. Even in the waning stage of our lives, we still can do a lot to grow and develop but in old age growth and development stepping back rather than continuing. It doesn’t mean that people become recluses. We need to find ways to share the wisdom and learning from our life to the younger generation.”

The above definition clears that old age is not a burden. So the elderly people need to develop a positive attitude towards their growing age.

Ageing is a universal and irreversible process. It is a lifelong process. Ageing is a process that accumulates changes in organism over time. These changes occur little by little and progress



inevitably over time. However, the rate of this progression can vary differently for different persons.

Attitude towards Ageing Scale

Attitude towards ageing scale is developed by Dr. Taresh Bhatia and Dr. Prabhasker Rai. The present scale has been developed to measure attitude towards ageing. It was decided to write 65 items for the scale. Then, for the purpose of item-analysis, the scale was administered to the subjects of different age groups both male and female. The top 27% and lower 27% were selected for item analysis. The critical ratio was applied to find out the discriminative value of each item. All the items were then arranged in descending order according to their critical ratio values. The first 35 items with largest discriminative values were selected and others were rejected. Thus the final scale of 35 items is named as attitude towards ageing scale.

Scoring

It is a five point scale, the scoring of which has been objectified by assigning five to one scores respectively for five alternatives of the positive items, rated strongly agree to strongly disagree. For the negative items the score assigned to each of alternatives have been reversed. They range from one to five for five alternatives.

The following table shows item distribution

Positive items	Negative items	Total items
1,2,3,4,5,7,8,10,11,12,14,15,16, 18,19,29,21,23,24,25,26,27,,28 ,29,30,32,33,34,35	6,9,13,17,22,31	35
Total items 29	06	35

Table . Independent test on Rohtak sample (social support)

Group Statistics					
	2	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Social support	urban	50	5.3574	.88511	.12517
	rural	50	5.5036	1.01727	.14386

Table . Independent test on Rohtak sample (Attitude towards ageing)



Group Statistics						
	2	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Mean
Attitude toward s Ageing	urban	50	135.4400	11.42886	1.61628	

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the role of social support in cognitive impairment and attitude towards ageing among elderly. To fulfill this purpose, Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support by Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet & Farley (1988), Elderly Cognitive Assessment Questionnaire by Kua and Ko (1992) and Attitude towards ageing scale by Dr. Taresh Bhatia and Dr. Prabhasker Rai were administered.

Conclusion

Many elderly people face the problem of isolation, depression, cognitive impairment which makes their life a burden for them. Their attitude towards their ageing becomes negative. But this is not for all elderly people. Many old people enjoy their life and want to live long. Social support is very important for elderly people to live a happy and satisfactory life. Social support is the perception and actuality that one is cared for, has help available from other people. Social support can come from various sources like: family, friends, romantic partners, pets and coworkers. It protects them from many mental and psychological problems. Social support buffers the depression, cognitive impairment and helps them to live actively and participate in society.

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