

# Impact of Educational Status on Social Well Being of Elderly

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Aging is a multidimensional change involving the social, physical as well as psychological aspects for an individual. It can be described as a progressive deterioration of the physical and mental functions resulting in a simultaneous decline in both the capacity of the body to maintain homeostatic balance as well as the adaptability of the individual to various stressors thereby consequently increasing the chances of illness and mortality. Many changes occur as people enter old age, and these changes decrease quality of life. Social well being is the degree to which a person positively evaluates the overall quality of his life as-a-whole. This study was carried out to assess whether the educational status has an effect on social well being of elderly or not.

**Material and methods:** A self structured standardized questionnaire was used to collect the information regarding social well being of the elderly. A total of 200 elderly respondents were selected purposively from the Lucknow city comprised of illiterate, high school, intermediate, graduate and post graduate and above. Average age was 70-80 years with a mean range from 65 to 96.

**Statistical analysis:** ANOVA and  $\chi^2$  has been administered and analysis has been done using SPSS-20 version.

**Results and discussion:** There is a significant effect of educational status on

social well being of elderly. From a total of 200 elderly respondents 23% were illiterate, 6.5%, 19%, 24.5% and 27% were educated up to high school, intermediate, graduate and post graduate and above, respectively and it was also concluded that from the total of 200 elderly respondents 49% scored high level of social well being whereas cent percent and 1% scored medium and low level of social well being respectively. As hypothesised, there is a significant difference in social well being among people.

## Keywords:

Educational status; elderly; social well being

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The ageing of population is an obvious consequence of the process of demographic transition. While the countries of the West have already experienced and have planned for their elderly population, it is only in the last one and half decades that countries in Asia too are facing a steady growth of the elderly, as a result of the decline in fertility and mortality, better medical and health care and improvements in the overall quality of life of people. Within Asia, as India and China are the two largest countries in the region, it is expected that they would have a significant proportion of the World's elderly because of their large population base.

There has been a progressive increase in both the number and proportion of the aged in India over time, particularly after 1951. Between 1901 and 1951, the proportion of population over age 60 increased marginally from 5 percent to 5.4 percent, while by 2001 this had increased to 7.0 percent. When changes in the decadal growth rate in the general population are compared with those for the elderly population, it is noted that the latter grew at a relatively much faster rate than the general population, since 1951. Furthermore, the decadal percent increase in the elderly population for the period 2001-2011 is likely to be more than double the rate of increase of the general population. The size of the elderly rose in absolute terms during the last century from 12 million in 1901 to approximately 71 million in 2001 and is likely to reach 113 million in 2016. Yet another feature of ageing in India is the fact that the proportion of elderly is much higher in the rural areas than in the urban areas. The sex-wise pattern of growth of elderly population reveals that the increase is greater among women in the recent past, which indicates that elderly women will outnumber elderly men in the future.

There is therefore an urgent need to examine the various aspects of this new and fast growing population to ensure the design of appropriate policy and programmes directed to meet the varied needs of this vulnerable and dependent group.

Every human being passes through various stages in his lifetime i.e. birth, infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood and old age. This biological transition through different stages has cultural and human overtones. For the individual, age serves as an important base for self perception and role performance. In an Indian home, elderly are regarded as symbols of the divine and given utmost respect. They are considered as the

repositories of wisdom, carriers of traditions and transmitters of experience of ideas of group living.

Ageing is progressive development in life span and a marker of life's journey towards growth and maturity. The word ageing is a phenomenon that has been widely discussed in the last decades. Nevertheless this quick aging process also observed in developing countries, still relies on scares. Studies in this area in order to supply the necessary element the proposition of appropriate policies to this growing part of the population; especially taking into account its social well being.

Researches indicate that elderly as compared to the younger cohorts, are more vulnerable to certain losses. They may lose their friends, life partners, older relatives, neighbour due to disease, divorce, death, geographical mobility and retirement. It is the age when people face common problems as physical helplessness, economic insecurity, loneliness, increased leisure time, loss of spouse, lack of social support and health complaints etc., which affect the psychological well being. There is a factor which also affects the social well being, is educational status of the person.

As family members attempt to meet the health, financial and social needs of the elderly, the stress and strain they experience can result in physical and emotional exhaustion. The caregivers feel guilt, fear, rage, frustration and enormous fatigue especially when they must care for the elderly person through the night and then go off to the work during the day. Without the needed resources, the burdened and frustrated caregivers may prematurely institutionalize the elderly relative, reach the danger point of neglect and abuse of the frail persons, or become ill themselves.

The present study explores the aspects of educational status and how it affects the social conditions of the elderly. This study focuses on the impact of educational status on elderly's social well being.

In order to improve the quality of life of older people and support prosperity in an ageing society, it is necessary to provide all people over their life course with opportunities for self-fulfillment, learning, education and active life. Linear model of education, work and pension becomes increasingly outdated and boundaries between individual stages of the life cycle become more flexible and less distinct. Older persons have similarly as all other people the right to be assessed as individuals, on the basis of their abilities and needs, regardless of their age, sex, colour of skin, disability or other characteristics. Older persons and their knowledge and experience should be placed in the centre of changes implemented in response to population ageing.

## 2. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The progress of scientific invention in the field of medical science has lead to rise in life expectancy of an individual giving rise to increase in elderly population. Hand in hand our society is undergoing rapid changes, putting forth a competitive

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

world for the youngsters to prove their expertise. Preoccupied with the tensions and anxieties, the younger generation is left with less time to spend for the elderly and realize their responsibilities towards them.

On the other hand the elderly confront many psychological, physiological and social problems. There is no one to take care of their needs due to the societal trends towards modernization and urbanization. This inturn leaves the elderly with a vacuum in their lives.

In the new era of 21<sup>st</sup> century youngsters are engaged in money oriented practices. They are very much materialistic having insensitive attitude towards their families especially elderly people.

## 3. METHODOLOGY:

In the present study, a self structured standardized questionnaire was used to collect the information regarding the psychological conditions of the elderly. The sample was selected purposively from 5 categories; those are illiterate, high school, intermediate, graduate and postgraduate & above. The data was collected from a total of 200 elderly. The data was coded, then tabulated and analysed with the help of SPSS (version 20). ANOVA and chi-square test has been administered to analyse the data.

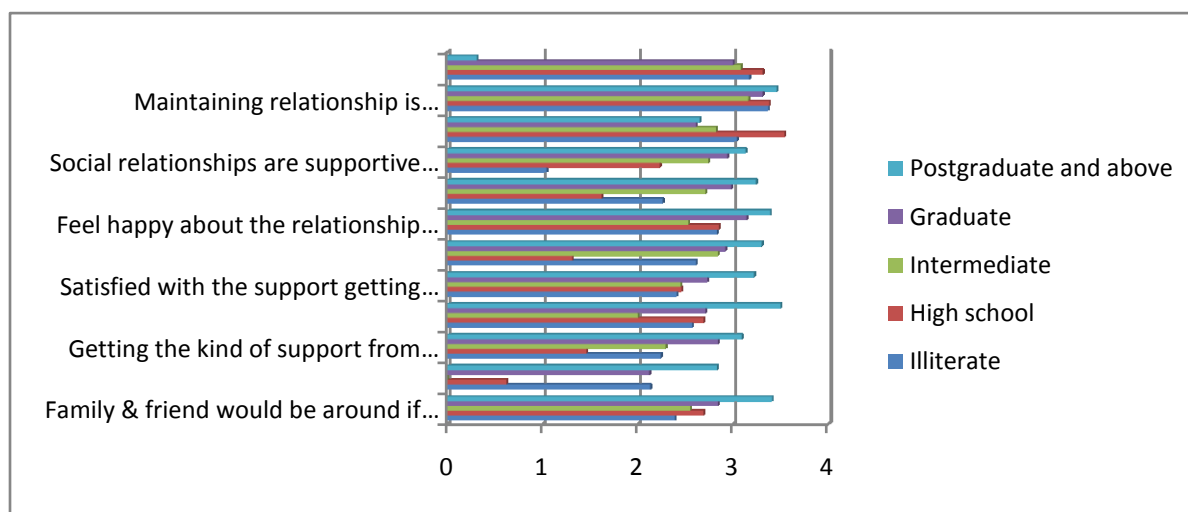
**Table 1: Impact of educational status on social well being of elderly.**

Item	Illiterate		High school		Intermediate		Graduate		Postgraduate and above		F	P
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Family and friend would be around if needed	2.39	1.06	2.69	0.75	2.55	0.76	2.84	0.77	3.41	0.69	11.01**	0.0

												0
<b>Physical health limits socialization ability</b>	2.13	1.19	0.62	0.77	1.53	1.11	2.12	1.27	2.83	0.95	14.24**	0 .0 0
<b>Getting the kind of support from others</b>	2.24	1.18	1.46	1.13	2.29	1.09	2.84	0.75	3.09	0.68	11.92**	0 .0 0
<b>Satisfied with the support from the family</b>	2.57	1.02	2.69	0.75	2.00	1.07	2.71	0.94	3.50	0.58	16.74**	0 .0 0
<b>Satisfied with the support from the friends</b>	2.41	0.69	2.46	0.52	2.45	1.18	2.73	0.7	3.22	0.74	8.26**	0 .0 0
<b>Satisfied with the ability to provide support</b>	2.61	1.2	1.31	0.63	2.84	0.75	2.92	0.34	3.30	0.54	19.42**	0 .0 0
<b>Feel happy about the relationship with the family</b>	2.83	0.77	2.85	0.99	2.53	1.08	3.14	0.79	3.39	0.74	6.72**	0 .0 0
<b>Satisfied with participation in community activities</b>	2.26	1.2	1.62	0.96	2.71	0.61	2.98	0.6	3.24	0.58	16.97**	0 .0 0
<b>Social relationships are supportive and rewarding</b>	2.04	1.07	2.23	0.83	2.74	0.6	2.94	0.83	3.13	0.65	13.46**	0 .0 0
<b>Need to have strong connections</b>	3.04	0.92	3.54	0.52	2.82	0.96	2.61	1.19	2.65	1.15	2.91	0 .0 2

<b>Maintaining relationship is important</b>	3.37	0.61	3.38	0.87	3.16	0.75	3.31	0.62	3.46	0.5	1.36	0.24
<b>Usually connected with relatives</b>	3.17	0.64	3.31	0.95	3.08	0.75	3.00	0.89	3.31	0.51	1.48	0.21
<b>Total</b>	31.07	6.04	28.15	2.15	30.68	4.59	34.14	3.97	38.54	5.03	24.89**	0.00

\*Significant  
 \*\* Highly Significant



**Fig.1**

The above table clearly indicates that there is a significant effect of education on elderly's social well being. The table showed that the elderly who are well qualified scored high mean value in comparison to others (Illiterate, High school, Intermediate, Graduate, Post graduate and above). The data revealed that who are postgraduate or above are more socially active ( $\mu = 3.41$ ) as they have family or friends if they needed in comparison to other

groups, same as highly educated elderly are more aware with regard to their health and that is the reason their physical health does not limits their ability to socialize. Whereas the elderly who are educated up to high school scored higher mean ( $\mu = 3.38$ ) as they think they do not need to maintain relationships with others and they also agree that they have too strong connection, as they scored score high mean value  $\mu = 3.54$ .

**Table:2 Percentage distribution of respondents according to their educational status.**

Social Well Being	Illiterate	High School	Intermediate	Graduate	Post Graduate & Above	Total
<b>High (35-48)</b>	17 (0.17)	00(00)	08 (0.08)	29 (0.29)	44 (0.44)	98 (49)
<b>Medium (21-34)</b>	27 (27)	13 (13)	30 (30)	20 (20)	10 (10)	100 (100)
<b>Low (0-20)</b>	02 (100)	00(00)	00(00)	00(00)	00(00)	02(01)
<b>Total</b>	46 (23)	13 (6.5)	38 (19)	49 (24.5)	54 (27)	200 (100)

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

$$\chi^2 = 26.150^{**}$$

$$\chi^2_{(0.5)} = 15.51$$

$$\chi^2_{(0.01)} = 20.09$$

It is observed from the above table that there is a significant effect of educational status on social well being of elderly. From the total of 200 elderly respondents 23% were illiterate, 6.5%, 19%, 24.5% and 27% were educated up to high school, intermediate, graduate and post graduate and above, respectively and it was also concluded that from the total of 200 elderly respondents 49% respondents scored high level of social well being where as 100% and 1% scored medium and low level of social well being, respectively. It is obvious from the table that higher the education better social well being. The finding that education is significantly related to social well being is in accordance with the observations of **Randhawa and Bhatnagar (1987)** and **Subramanian (1989)**. Both studies revealed that the better-educated elderly had higher level of social adjustment. It is quite appropriate to state that, generally education makes an elderly person to be more accepted in his society, **Cherian et. al (1999)**.

### 5. CONCLUSION:

It is concluded that education had a highly significant relationship with the social well being. The person who is well educated may lead a meaningful and purposeful life in the society; because an educated person is well known about, what the society exactly expect from him and what is approved by

the society. The significance of the present study can be related with most of the sociological theories which propound that active socialization is possible through better education. Education plays a very significant role in a person's life, same is proved in the present paper that better education contributes to higher levels of social adjustment. Education is a most important tool to set an individual within the society. Generally elderly people are less social because of physical deterioration, less active, but the elderly who possess good qualification record are aware about their health. If health is good, everything will be good; the person will be active and lead a good life.

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