

Spiritual Intelligence: A Contemporary Concern with Regard to Living Status of the Senior Citizens

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Spirituality exists in the heart and the mind of men and women everywhere, with in religious traditions and independently of tradition. The aim of the present research was to study the spiritual intelligence of elderly people. For this purpose 200 senior citizens were selected from different living status i.e. living with family (N=100) and living in old age homes (N=100). Findings revealed that no significant difference was found between seniors citizens living with family & living in old age homes regarding overall spiritual-intelligence. Whereas, results indicated significant differences at many domains of spiritual intelligence such as, GOD and religiosity, soul, self awareness, interpersonal relations, spirituality in leadership, helping behaviour, flexibility, ability to use and overcome suffering, ability to transcend pain and being spiritually intelligent about death.

Keywords : Ageing/Senior citizens, spiritual intelligence (SQ), living status.

We are all conceived, live a life, and die. All things change through time. When looked at from the beginning of time, this change is called development; when viewed from the perspective of the ending, it is called Ageing (Reker, 1990).

In the last two decades the social scene, due to a number of factors had undergone drastic changes with the joint family system breaking down in India. Today nuclear families are the norm. This scenario is going to be further complicated because of many other social and economic changes eg. Indian society is slowly getting transformed to industrialized modern urban society. All these changes are causing adverse effect on well-being of the aged people.

Coupled with these changes, the increase in the number of the extremely aged, with many

physical impairments and other problems the old people requires intensive nursing and support. This will put serious strains on family resources. While family members may wish to continue care for their elderly relatives, it will be beyond their physical capacity & skill to provide continuous nursing and supervision. It is becoming difficult for a middle aged person to care for the generations of elderly relatives. In addition to carrying out the roles of parents and grandparents (Shuman, 1988). It is believed that now only 60% of senior citizens live in joint families. The rest of them live alone with their spouse, with distant relatives or in old age homes.

Elders are sometimes too incapacitated or unwell to look after themselves or get medical care especially in an emergency. All these have made the old age homes seem more relevant

in the Indian Context than ever before.

A higher level of intelligence power distinguishes human beings from other animals on this planet. It has been the favourite subject of research for psychologists. In the 20th century, they created IQ tests to define and measure intelligence power of an individual. But, it proved inadequate for measuring the wide spectrum of intelligence. In the 21st century, they are saying that ultimate intelligence is spiritual intelligence.

Human beings are spiritual in nature. Spirituality is a natural state for all of us. A problem arises when we don't take our spirituality seriously. It is a life or death issue. A person can be physically alive but spiritually dead. Are we human beings on a spiritual journey? Our life depends upon our finding the answer.

Zohar and Marshall (2000) created the term spiritual intelligence. The term derived from the latin word 'Wind or breath'. This is literally a wind that is blowing through us, the principle that makes us alive and humane.

Spiritual Intelligence, Zohar (2000) said, "is our access to and use of meaning, vision and value in the way that we think and the decision that we make". It is the intelligence that makes us whole, that gives us our integrity. It is the soul's intelligence, the intelligence of deep self, that with which we ask fundamental questions and with which we reframe our answers.

Spiritual Intelligence is where we begin to open up to our spirit's journey and to quest for a greater understanding of life. It is where we seek for find higher purpose and a greater sense of self. It is where we become wise by accessing our natural bright light of wisdom.

Spiritual intelligence is concerned with the inner life of mind and spirit and its relationship to being in the world. It implies a capacity for a deep understanding of existential questions and insight into multiple levels of consciousness. It is more than individual

mental ability. In addition to self-awareness, it implies awareness of our relationship to the transcendent, to each other, to the earth & all beings.

Spiritual intelligence opens the heart, illuminates the mind, and inspires the soul, connecting the individual human psyche to the underlying ground of being. It can be developed with practice and can help a person to distinguish reality from illusion. It may be expressed in any culture as love, wisdom and service. It is related to emotional intelligence in so far as spiritual practice includes developing intrapersonal and interpersonal sensitivity.

As we all know very few studies have been conducted to find out the spiritual intelligence especially for senior citizens. Senior citizens after reaching 60 years of age, experienced less continuity in life, more dissatisfaction, more social isolation, neglected, less cared and useless, and these feelings are more commonly found among senior citizens living alone or without family; Where as Spiritual Intelligence (Conscious Pursuits, 2003) is 'The ability to act with wisdom and compassion while maintaining inner and outer peace, regardless of the circumstances'. So, it can be said that SQ can make a great contribution to elderly for their better living conditions. Therefore, it was found out much and much effort has been needed to conduct research studies on older people to explain their spiritual intelligence.

The purpose of the present study is to examine whether senior citizens living with family and living in old age homes differ significantly in respect of their spiritual intelligence.

Method

Sample

The sample consisted of an equal number of senior citizens living with family and living in old age homes i.e. 100 each of both sexes. The sample of senior citizens living with family

drawn from different families of Jaipur and Sriganganagar (Raj.) like wise the sample of senior citizens living in old age homes was drawn from the old age homes such as Shri Ram Vradh Ashram, Chaksu, Jaipur, Anubhav of Helpage India, Vivek Vradh Ashram Shriganganager. The mean age of the aged persons was 69.4 years.

Tools

Salahkaar spiritual Quotient test (SQi-t)TM (2003), developed by Daftuar, Dasgupta and Manghrani for measuring spiritual intelligence was used. The test contains 15 dimensions and 99 items of spiritual intelligence named: God and religiosity, Soul, Self awareness, Spiritual practices, life style values, Gender and caste equality, Fate and Karma, Interpersonal relations, Divinity in love, Spirituality in leadership, Helping behaviour, Flexibility, Ability to use and over come suffering, Ability to transcend pain & Being spiritually intelligent about death.

The test was tried twice on two different types of samples. On a four-point Likert-type scale the reliability values on the sample of adults normal population ranged from .63 to .91. In the second tryout on a sample of industrial managers the reliability values ranged from .346 to .91. The reliability values for the total scale was found .91 in both attempts. Face validity and content validity were established.

Procedure

The respondents of the two groups were approached individually at their residents and old age homes. The objectives of the study were explained to them. After establishing workable rapport test was administered on them. Instructions were imparted with the help of standardized directions.

Results

On the basis of source acquaintances with the subject and objectives it was hypothesised, that SQ would significantly differ in senior

citizens of different living status i.e. living with family and living in old age homes. t-test was computed to compare overall spiritual intelligence and its domain i.e. God and religiosity, Soul, Self awareness, Spiritual practices, life style values, Gender and caste equality, Fate and Karma, Interpersonal relations, Divinity in love, Spirituality in leadership, Helping behaviour, Flexibility, Ability to use and over come suffering, Ability to transcend pain and Being spiritually intelligent about death. Table 1 provides Mean, SD and t values of the scores on 15 dimensions of spiritual intelligence and overall intelligence.

Table 1 shows that the Mean score of over all spiritual intelligence of senior citizens living with family is 288.04 whereas Mean score of spiritual intelligence living in old age homes is 289.28, which shows that the difference between the two groups was not significant.

Table 1 further depicts the significant differences between two groups on God and religiosity. Soul, Interpersonal Relations Spirituality in leadership, helping behaviour, Flexibility, Ability to use and overcome suffering domains of spiritual intelligence reveal that senior citizens living in old age homes scored higher on these dimensions.

On the other hand, results table also connotes a significant difference in self-awareness and ability to transcend pains of the senior citizens living in family and old age homes, thus, the results obtained indicated that senior citizens living in the family shows higher level of self-awareness and ability to transcend pains in comparison to senior citizens living in old age homes.

Further no significant difference was observed between these two groups of older people on spiritual practices, life style values, Gender and Caste equality, Fate and Karma and Divinity in love.

Discussion

In the traditional Buddhist culture, old age

is conceived as one of the stage of human development cohere in a person attain maturity, wisdom, an economic and social stability with social recognition leading to the most final stage, which is expected to be of spiritual salvation.

Spiritual intelligence is the most essential to our well-being (Zohar & Marshall, 2000). SQ puts our individual lives into large context. It provides meaning and purpose to life and allows us to create new possibilities.

The present investigation indicates that no significant difference is found between senior citizens living with family and living in old age homes regarding over all spiritual intelligence.

Many people think that spirituality and religion are same. Religion and spirituality exists together but as Troycross (1998) wrote "Every one has a spiritual component, but not everyone is religious". Results suggests that senior citizens living with family are less religious than senior citizens living in old age homes. Seniors citizens living in old age homes scored high on God and Religion domain of spiritual intelligence.

Religion includes specific beliefs and practices, where spirituality is far broader (Effersole & Hess, 1988) Religion is our response to what GOD has done. Religion is not about spirituality. All spirituality is religious; but not all religion is spiritual. God is not religion. Religion is a practical response to God and therefore God can't be religious. Religiosity as well as productive engagement in work does play a pivotal role in individual's daily life (Jain, & Sharma, 2004). Religious beliefs of older people also seem to be producing an impart on the perception of safety. Religious participation is positively associated with both the quantity and the quality of social relationship (Ellison & George, 1994). It can be said that senior citizens living in old age homes keep themselves busy by engaging them in spiritual practices.

As individuals get older they have less control over their social relationships, including the ability to maintain contact with friends. Moreover relocation of the elderly to institution results in a disruption of existing social networks (Chadha et al. 1993) and new neighbours and friends rarely provide the same feelings of security as old ones (Khalish, 1975).

The soul is actually the vessel for the integration of all that we are Stir the place where we discover our essential self, and our access to creation where passion and vision lie waiting for us. (Solera Green). Senior citizens living in old age homes scored high on 'soul' domain of spiritual intelligence.

This study indicated that senior citizens living with family have been found to have more self awareness than senior citizens living in old age homes. When we talk about self-awareness, senior citizens living with family are busy in their social and religious activities. They have established strong social relation as compared to senior citizens living in old age homes. The friends and social circle motivate them to follow up daily activities enthusiastically and take care of health, nutrition and exercise. Also they shoulder social and religious responsibilities willingly, plan and implement efficiently which give them social recognition, appreciation, satisfaction, keeping them psychologically healthy.

A number of socio-epidemiological investigations, both in the Western nations as well as in India (Miller et al, 1976; Line et al, 1979; Billings et al, 1981, Sarason 1981; blzaer, 1982, Broadhard et al, 1982; Ram Chandran and Sarda Menon, 1982, Kushara & Chopra, 1996; Guatam & Pant, 1997) have consistently found the role of various factors like poor social support, isolation be reavement and widow hood, unanticipated retirement, economic deprivation and unemployment, low social class, poor living conditions and stressful life events in precipitating, maintaining or

exacerbating depressive disorders among senior citizens. All of these losses may affect self esteem, confidence, connectedness. In such a chain of events, the hopelessness and helplessness of depression may not be far behind.

Where as spiritual intelligence, the capacity to find meaning and purpose in life, understand and nourish our relationship to the Divine define and follow a moral-ethical path and practice loving kindness, can help the aged person to over come from the monotonous & lonely life and despair may replace sense of purpose.

Implications

1. Aged people are distinctly more happy

and satisfied by living in the family. Every effort should, therefore, be made to encourage their stay with their families.

2. It is important to begin to defuse the stereotype attitude about ageing process that hold elders back, and to promote the concept of 'old age' as a stage of development with its own unique challenges.

3. Spiritual intelligence is an experienced and informed ability that gives us access to immediate knowledge and higher wisdom, and helps us achieve excellence in life. Counselling session should arrange for elderly to develop spiritual intelligence.

Table 1: Mean, SD and t-values for spiritual intelligence of senior citizens living with family (n = 100) and living in old age homes (n = 100).

Subjects	Mean	SD	t-values
	God and Religiosity		
FL	33.98	6.15	
OAH	35.99	6.14	-2.312*
	Soul		
FL	10.62	2.98	
OAH	11.71	2.80	-2.667*
	Self awareness		
FL	17.98	6.34	
OAH	15.20	6.27	3.116*
	Spiritual Practices		
FL	27.93	8.27	
OAH	27.82	7.35	0.99
	Life Style Values		
FL	31.66	8.19	
OAH	31.50	7.14	0.147
	Gender and Caste equality		
FL	23.26	9.73	
OAH	22.75	9.59	0.373
	Fate and Karma		
FL	11.16	3.06	
OAH	11.86	3.41	-1.527

	Interpersonal Relations		
FL	16.91	4.28	
OAH	19.15	3.78	-3.923*
	Divinity in love		
FL	11.70	2.60	
OAH	11.38	2.96	0.813
	Spirituality in leadership		
FL	24.26	6.82	
OAH	20.49	7.46	3.329*
	Helping behaviour		
FL	9.46	2.146	
OAH	10.09	1.979	-2.164*

FL - Senior Citizens living with family

OAH - Senior Citizens living in old age homes

* Significant at 0.05 level

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Received : December, 13, 2005

Accepted: June 02, 2006

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