

## Resilience, life satisfaction and perceived stress among elderly people living separately from their adult children-: a cross-sectional comparative study

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### ABSTRACT

**Aim of the study:** The study was conducted to assess and compare the level of resilience, life satisfaction and perceived stress between elderly living separately from their adult children and elderly living with their adult children or family members. And to find out the correlation between resilience, life satisfaction and perceived stress in later life. **Methods and Materials:** A community based cross-sectional comparative study was carried out in some selected areas in Varanasi district, in Uttar Pradesh. A total of 150 elderly people (75 living with their adult children or other family members as group-1 and 75 living separately from their adult children as group-2) aged 60 years and above were interviewed using a semi-structured questionnaire including socio-demographic questionnaire, Brief Resilience Scale (BRS), Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) and Perceived Stress Scale (PSS). **Result:** The mean age of the respondents was 66.95±6.08 years; most of them were aged between 60-69 years in both study groups. Elderly people living with their adult children or other family members were found with a higher degree of resilience and life satisfaction and lower degree of perceived stress compared to elderly people living separately from their children. There was a significant positive correlation between resilience and life satisfaction, but on the other hand perceived stress was negatively correlated with resilience and life satisfaction. **Conclusion:** The living arrangement of elderly people plays an important role in their wellbeing and support from family members (especially their adult children) is also its essential part. Increase in resilience through social support, can increase life satisfaction and decrease the level of perceived stress among elderly people.

**Keywords:** Older Adults, Successful Aging, Living Arrangement, Psychosocial Problems, Psychiatric Morbidity

A rapid increase has been noticed in the population of elderly people (aged 60 years and above) in all over the world in the last few decades. Currently, the global population older

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adults have reached up to 962 million and it is projected that it will reach about 2.1 billion by the year 2050 (UN 2002; WHO 2014). Population of elderly people is also increasing in India day by day. According to census 2011, there are about 104 million elderly people aged 60 years and above residing in India; 51 million males and 53 million females (Statistics, E.2016; Delhi, N. 2005; Sathyanarayana et al, 2014). With this increase in the population of elderly people, several other problems such prevalence of physical and mental illness, financial and other psychosocial problems are also increasing. Change in the living arrangement of elderly people also has been noticed due to urbanization, industrialization, decline in the joint family system and outmigration of adult children in other cities or states in search of better carrier and employment. According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) 2005-06 reports, there are about three-fourths of elderly people either living alone or only with their spouse in India. And those who live alone, most of them are females (IIPS 2007).

Living alone or separately from adult children or family members without any proper care and support in later life may increase the prevalence of physical and mental illness among elderly people. Successful aging of elderly people depends upon some important factors such as living arrangement, social support from family members, resilience, life satisfaction, and perceived stress, etc. Some previous studies have suggested that resilience, life satisfaction and perceived stress play an important role in successful aging of older adults (Kim, M. 2017; Wagnild 2003; Moore et al., 2015). Studies suggest that a higher degree of resilience and life satisfaction have a significant association with successful aging. But the perceived stress has a negative effect on successful aging, and in the long term, it increases the prevalence of psychiatric disorders and physical diseases among elderly people (Kim, M. 2017; MacLeod 2016; Cohen 1996; Zhang 2014).

In India, very few studies have been conducted to assess and compare the level of resilience, life satisfaction, and perceived stress among elderly people living separately from their adult children without any proper care and support and elderly people living with their adult children or other family members in the community. And association these important factors (the level of resilience, life satisfaction, and perceived stress) with successful aging in Indian society still needs to be found. Hence, the present study was conducted with the following objectives:

### ***Objectives***

1. To assess and compare the level of resilience, life satisfaction and perceived stress among elderly people living with their adult children or other family members and elderly people are living separately from their children in community.
2. To find out the correlation between resilience, life satisfaction and perceived stress among elderly people.

### ***Hypothesis***

1. There will be no significant difference between the level of resilience, life satisfaction and perceived stress among elderly people living with their adult children or other family members and elderly people are living separately from their children in community.
2. There will be no significant correlation between resilience, life satisfaction and perceived stress among elderly people.

## METHOD AND MATERIALS

A community based cross sectional study was conducted between June 2018 to February 2019 among 150 elderly people aged 60 and above (75 elderly people Living with their adult children or other family members and 75 elderly people living separately from their adult children) living in some selected areas in Varanasi district, Uttar Pradesh. The present study was approved by ethical committee of Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India.

### *Inclusion Criteria*

1. Elderly people aged 60 years and above.
2. Those who gave the informed consent.
3. Elderly people living with their children and family members and Elderly living separately from their children.

### *Exclusion Criteria*

1. Having any hearing or visual impairment and other chronic illness.
2. Neither willing to participate in the study nor giving consent.

### *Study Tools*

A semi structured questionnaire was prepared including socio-demographic variables (such as age, gender, age, gender, marital status, education, occupation, religion, categories, and socioeconomic status), Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) (Denier et al., 1985), Brief Resilience Scale (BRS) (Smith et al., 2008) and Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) (Cohen et al., 1994) by the research scholar.

### *Sampling Procedure*

First, we randomly selected 5 wards out of 90 wards of the Varanasi district and contacted local authorities like ward Parshad (councilor) and some local volunteer to help us to find the respondents. The research scholar went to every 5th house in the selected ward, and the respondents were selected for interview if they fulfilled the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Then they were interviewed using prepared semi-structured questionnaire. Each interview in the study had taken approximately 30 minutes. And if the respondents wanted to quit the interview between they were excluded.

### *Statistical Analysis*

The data were entered in the MS Excel after the competition of data collection. The qualitative data were presented in the form of frequency and percentage. The analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics software (Version-20). The descriptive analysis involved calculation of mean and standard deviation (SD) with a range of continuous variables and frequency and percentage for nominal and ordinal variables. Comparison was done using Independent-samples /Student t-test at the significance level of 0.05. Correlation analysis involved calculation of Pearson's correlation coefficient.

## RESULTS

**Table 1** show that majority of the respondents 68% in group-1 and 52% in group-2 had normal resilience. Low resilience was found more common (47%) in elderly living separately from their children. Majority of the respondents (37.3%) were found satisfied in group-1, but in other hand about half of the respondents were either slightly dissatisfied or dissatisfied. Perceived stress was found more common in both study groups, but level of perceived stress

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**Table 1:** Distribution of the respondents according to the level of Resilience, Life satisfaction and Perceived stress.

Level	Elderly people living with their children or family members (Group-1) N=75 f (%)	Elderly people living separately from their children (Group-2) N=75 f (%)
<b>Resilience</b>		
High Resilience	3 (4.0)	1 (1.3)
Normal	51 (68.0)	39 (52.0)
Low Resilience	21 (28.0)	35 (46.7)
<b>Life Satisfaction</b>		
Satisfied	28 (37.3)	16 (21.3)
Slightly Satisfied	10 (13.3)	13 (17.3)
Neutral	1 (1.3)	2 (2.7)
Slightly Dissatisfied	17 (22.7)	20 (26.7)
Dissatisfied	18 (24.0)	21 (28.0)
Extremely Dissatisfied	1 ((1.3)	3 (4.0)
<b>Perceived Stress</b>		
Low Stress	36 (34.7)	15 (20.0)
Moderate Stress	44 (58.7)	47 (62.7)
High Stress	5 (6.7)	13 (17.3)

was found high in elderly living separately in comparison to elderly living with their children and family members.

**Table 2** shows that there was significant difference in resilience, satisfaction, and perceived stress between both study groups. Elderly people living separately from their children has lower level of resilience and satisfaction with life compared to elderly people living with their children and other family members. Results also showed that living separately from their children and family members in old age increase level of perceived stress among elderly people.

**Table 2:** Comparison of Resilience, Satisfaction with life and Perceived stress between study groups.

	Elderly people living with their children or family members (Group-1) N=75		Elderly people living separately from their children (Group-2) N=75		t value	P value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Resilience	3.12	0.57	2.77	0.69	3.322	<b>0.001*</b>
SWL	21.23	6.58	18.53	6.09	2.599	<b>0.010*</b>
Perceived Stress	16.88	6.61	20.13	6.87	2.956	<b>0.004*</b>

**Note:** \* Significant at the level of 0.05, SD: Standard Deviation, SWLS: Satisfaction with Life

**Table 3: Correlation between residence, satisfaction with life and perceived stress**

	Resilience	SWL	Perceived Stress
Resilience		0.539*	-0.553*
SWL	0.539*		-0.654*
Perceived Stress	-0.553*	-0.654*	

**Note:** \*significant at the level of 0.01, SWLS: Satisfaction with Life Scale

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**Table 3** shows that resilience was found significantly correlated with satisfaction with life in positive direction and negatively correlated with perceived stress. Furthermore, satisfaction with life was negatively correlated with perceived stress. Resilience was found positively correlated with satisfaction with life ( $r=0.54$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ) and negatively correlated with perceived stress ( $r=-0.55$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ). And similarly, satisfaction was found negatively correlated with perceived stress ( $r=-0.65$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ).

### DISCUSSION

There were two main purposes of the present study, first, it was conducted to assess and compare the level of resilience, life satisfaction and perceived stress among elderly people living separately from their adult children and elderly living with adult children or other family members in the community. And second to examine the correlation between resilience, life satisfaction and perceived stress in older adults. The present study revealed that elderly people living with their adult children or other family members at their home have obtained a high score on the factors of resilience and life satisfaction and a low score on perceived stress compared to elderly people living separately from their adult children at their home in the community. In the present study, resilience and life satisfaction were found significantly higher in degree among the elderly living with their adult children or other family members in the community. Several previous studies have suggested that the person with high resilience improve the coping mechanism and tolerance for negative feelings and also improve the capacity for self-reflection (Vanderpol, 2002). A study was conducted by Wells M. (2012) to assess and compare the level resilience among elderly living in rural, suburban and urban areas, and found that resilience was significantly associated with the family network and good physical and mental health among elderly. In some other studies, resilience was found associated with some predictor variables such as self-efficacy, social support, wisdom, life satisfaction, and health (McClain et al., 2018; Hayat et al., 2016).

A study conducted by Banjare P et al., (2015) on factors associated with the life satisfaction amongst the rural elderly in Odisha, they found that living arrangement of elderly affect the level of perceived life satisfaction among elderly people, elderly living alone or separately from their children without any support have significantly low score of activity of daily living and low level of perceived life satisfaction. A study conducted in Taiwan to find out the relationship between life satisfaction and living arrangement, the result was found that living with adult children and with proper care and support elderly people would have a higher degree of life satisfaction (Chen et al., 2011). Similarly in another study conducted in Poland, revealed that the living condition of older adults is an important predictor of life satisfaction. The relationship with family and support affects the level of life satisfaction. Older adults, who live with their close family members (especially their children) and friends, are more satisfied with their life than those living alone or living with spouse only (Kozerska, 2015).

In the present study, the level of perceived stress was found high among the respondents living separately compared to those living with their adult children or other family members. In a study conducted in Korea, living condition of older adults was found associated with perceived stress and health. Perceived stress and other mental health related problems such as depression, suicidal ideation etc. were found more among older adults living alone than those living with others in the community (Kim 2009). In another study conducted in Sweden, the result was found that the level of perceived stress increase with the age, and it is significantly

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associated with the living arrangement of older adults. Elderly who live alone perceived more stress than those living with their family members (Osmanovic-Thunström et al., 2015).

The present study also revealed that resilience was found positively associated with life satisfaction and negatively with perceived stress among elderly people. Previous studies have found a link between resilience, perceived stress, mental health functioning, and successful aging. Level perceived stress decreases with the increase in level resilience, further this increase in resilience also increase life satisfaction and mental health functioning among older adults (Beutel et al., 2010; Moore et al., 2015). Finding of some other previous studies indicate that high level of resilience is significantly associated with positive outcomes including life satisfaction, successful aging and reducing the prevalence of psychiatric morbidities such as depression, anxiety disorders, and other chronic diseases (Wells, 2012; MacLeod, 2016; Tkatch et al., 2017).

### ***Limitations***

There are several limitations in the present study. First, the research design of the present study was a cross-sectional comparative study design which limits the overall understanding about resilience that how it affects the level of life satisfaction and perceived stress among elderly people. An interventional study is required to find out its effect on the perceived level of stress and life satisfaction among elderly people and successful aging. Second, the sample size of the present study was too small. Third, the samples were collected from some selected areas in Varanasi district; therefore the result may not be generalized on the whole population. Fourth, several other important psychological factors including perceived social support, loneliness, optimism, self-efficacy spirituality etc. were not studied.

### **CONCLUSION**

The results of the present study concluded that elderly people living with their adult children or other family members have a higher degree of resilience, life satisfaction and a lower degree of perceived stress compared to elderly people living separately from their adult children in the community. Results also indicate that there is a significantly positive relationship between resilience and life satisfaction but on the other hand perceived stress has a negative relationship with resilience and life satisfaction. The living arrangement of elderly people plays an important role in their wellbeing and support from family members (especially their adult children) is also its essential part. Increase in resilience through social support, can increase life satisfaction and decrease the level of perceived stress among elderly people.

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### ***Conflict of Interest***

The author declared no conflict of interests.

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