

## A Study of Well Being of Elderly Persons in Relation to Literacy

Dr. Upasana Sharma<sup>1\*</sup>

### ABSTRACT

In the present study researcher attempted to study the wellbeing of elderly persons and its relation with literacy. A sample of 100 elderly people comprised the sample and standardised tool named Well-being scale (for aged people) developed by Prof. B. Nagarathna and Mrs. T.D. Vimala is used. Results computed by using percentage, mean and t-test. Findings showed that 4% of elderly persons fell into the category of very low level of well-being. 40 percent were in the category of low level of well-being. Almost half aged persons i.e. 45% fell into the category of average wellbeing and 11% stood into the category of high level of well-being. Dimensions social relations and self-esteem indicates high level of wellbeing of elderly persons and dimensions finances and spouses support have low level wellbeing of elderly persons. There is no significant difference in the wellbeing of elderly persons in relation to gender but There is no significant difference in the wellbeing of elderly persons in relation to literacy i.e. those persons who are literate have higher level of wellbeing than their counterpart.

**Keywords:** *Wellbeing, Elderly persons, Literacy, illiterate*

Education is thought of as a strong force that can significantly alter a person's life in the ways that are intended. It's a process of development. One way that education shapes a person's personality is by helping him become more confident, assertive, and strong in all that he does. However, it also helps people grow and develop on an individual and societal level. It helps in the wellbeing of a person, a person who is literate is likely to acquire knowledge for his good living and happy life. Education enables a person to tackle his problems confronted at different stages of life. Every stage of life like infancy, childhood, adulthood and old age has different challenges. Old age is a stage can indeed bring challenges, the challenges of aging, such as health issues, decreased mobility, and social isolation, can be difficult. Most individuals experience a decline in health status during old age. Studies have demonstrated that there is a positive relationship between learning activities and health in general and that learning has a positive impact on the psychological, mental and social aspects of health (Schoultz, 2020). The contribution of education is useful, meaningful personal enrichment (Sandell & Öhman, 2013). Attention can also be given to how skills like literacy, numeracy and physical literacy are working as mediators for the relationship between educational attainment and health (Whitehead, 2010, Yamashita et al., 2019). However, there are also ways to approach these challenges with resilience and positivity.

<sup>1</sup>Lecturer, Department of Education, University of Jammu, India

\*Corresponding Author

Received: August 20, 2024; Revision Received: September 07, 2024; Accepted: September 11, 2024

## **A Study of Well Being of Elderly Persons in Relation to Literacy**

Longitudinal data from the Berlin Aging Study indicates that the oldest old (those aged 70 and above) tend to experience a more pronounced decline in subjective wellbeing compared to their "young old" counterparts, likely due to the compounding effects of chronic illness and functional impairments. (Smith et al., 2002). "Aging societies are one of the massive transformations of the twenty-first century, and health policy measures are needed to ensure that older adults live longer lives in good health. In this search for improvements in the wellbeing of our older population, we must ensure that our health care systems do not burn out" (Placido. et.al, 2022). With the ongoing societal transformations, comprehending the variables that shape the well-being of the aging populace has emerged as a paramount concern. Literacy, in particular, plays a crucial role in the well-being of elderly individuals by influencing their ability to access information and engage with healthcare services effectively, which can significantly impact their overall quality of life.

### ***Old age***

Old age is a natural stage of life, generally considered to begin around 60 or 65 years of age, although this can vary depending on cultural, social, and individual perspectives. This period of life is marked by significant changes in physical, emotional, and social aspects, and it is a time when many individuals reflect on their life experiences and navigate the challenges and opportunities that come with aging.

### ***Literacy***

Ability of reading and writing are the most common definitions of literacy, the term can also refer to more general abilities such as comprehending and applying written and printed information in a variety of circumstances. In the current world, literacy is an essential ability for communication, education, and information access. A key component of civic engagement, economic opportunity, and personal growth is literacy.

### ***Well-Being***

The term "well-being" describes a condition of general health, contentment, and affluence. It shows a sense of balance, happiness, and satisfaction in a number of areas, including relationships, physical health, and personal fulfilment. It incorporates the mental, emotional, and physical facets of a person's existence. It varies from person to person, but in general, it indicates a positive quality of life and fulfilling existence.

### ***Importance of literacy in well-being***

Literacy plays a vital role in the overall well-being of elderly persons, affecting their cognitive, social, emotional, economic and practical aspects of life, and contributing to a more fulfilling and independent aging experience. It contributes towards, lifelong learning, provides health education and enables to manage tasks independently.

### ***Need of the Study***

Literacy is often associated with better mental health outcomes. Literacy is linked to cognitive reserve, which can delay the onset of cognitive decline and dementia. Understanding this relationship is essential for developing strategies to maintain cognitive health in older adults. Being literate allows elderly individuals to better understand medical information.

Studying the well-being of elderly persons in relation to literacy is crucial for several compelling reasons. Literacy enables elderly individuals to stay socially engaged through reading, writing, and using digital technologies. This can help prevent isolation and

## A Study of Well Being of Elderly Persons in Relation to Literacy

loneliness, which are common issues in older age. Literacy can influence social engagement and participation. Elderly individuals who struggle with literacy may be more susceptible to social isolation and loneliness, which are significant risk factors for mental health issues. As society becomes increasingly digital, the ability to use technology is closely tied to literacy. Many essential services, including banking, healthcare, and social interactions, are moving online. Elderly individuals with lower literacy levels may struggle to adapt, leading to exclusion from these services. Literacy is key to accessing and understanding information, which is crucial for making informed decisions. Governments and organizations need data-driven insights to create policies and programs that address the needs of the elderly. Understanding the link between literacy and well-being can guide the development of initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life for older adults. Identifying the areas where elderly individuals struggle most due to low literacy can help allocate resources more effectively, ensuring that support services are targeted where they are most needed. Ultimately, the goal of studying this topic is to enhance the overall well-being and quality of life for elderly individuals, ensuring that they can live fulfilling, independent, and dignified lives as they age.

The need to study the well-being of elderly persons in relation to literacy is driven by the complex and multifaceted challenges that aging populations face. By understanding how literacy impacts various aspects of their lives, society can develop more effective strategies to support and empower elderly individuals, leading to healthier, more connected, and more resilient aging communities.

### *Objectives of the Study*

The study was design to achieve the following objectives

- To study the level of well-being of elderly persons.
- To study the significant difference in the well-being of elderly people in relation to their gender and level of education (literacy/illiteracy).

### *Hypothesis of the Study*

There is no significant difference in the well-being of elderly persons in relation to their gender and level of education (literacy/illiteracy).

### *Population*

Population of the study was comprised of all the elderly persons (above the age of 60) in the Jammu District, in J&K UT.

### *Sample*

In the present study the sample of 100 elderly persons was selected randomly from three Towns/Municipal committee of Jammu District.

*Table no. 1 Sample selected.*

S.No.	Name of the Villages	Male	Female	Total
1.	Marh	20	20	40
2	Makhyal	20	20	40
3	Gho Manhasan	10	10	20
	<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

## A Study of Well Being of Elderly Persons in Relation to Literacy

### Tool Used

Well-being scale (for aged people) by Prof. B. Nagarathna and Mrs. T.D. Vimala

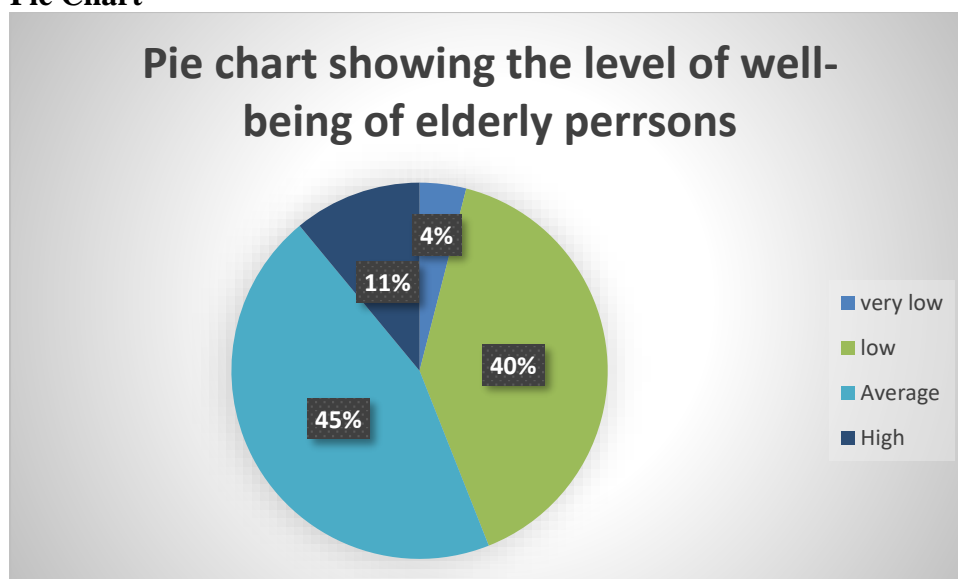
### Dimensions of Well-being scale (for aged people)

1. Emotional Stability
2. Health
3. Suicide Ideas
4. Tensions
5. Meaninglessness
6. Occupation
7. Finance
8. Social Relations
9. Family Relations
10. Life Satisfaction
- 11 Social Support
12. Self Esteem General
- 13 Efficiency
14. Spouses Support

**Table 2. Level of Well- Being of Elderly Persons**

S.No	SCORE	PERCENTAGE (%)	LEVEL OF WELL BEING
1	4	4	Very low
2	40	40	Low
3	45	45	Average
4	11	11	High

### Pie Chart



Perusal of table 2 and pie chart reveals that 4% of elderly persons fell into the category of very low level of well-being. 40 percent were in the category of low level of well-being. Almost half aged persons i.e. 45% fell into the category of average wellbeing and 11% stood into the category of high level of well-being. The reason for very low and low well-being of elderly person may be health issues, economic problems, bitter family relations or isolation.

### Mean value of different dimensions of well-being

**Table: 3**

S.No	Dimensions	Mean
1	Emotional Stability	54.4
2	Health	56
3	Suicide Ideas	55.3
4	Tension	52
5	Meaningfulness	52.33
6	Occupation	53
7	Finances	50.5

## A Study of Well Being of Elderly Persons in Relation to Literacy

S.No	Dimensions	Mean
8	Social Relations	59.8
9	Family Relations	53.5
10	Life Satisfaction	58
11	Social Support	55.5
12	Self Esteem	60
13	General Efficiency	55
14	Spouses Support	51.5

Perusal of table reveals that mean value of dimension emotional stability of elderly person was 54.4, the mean value of dimensions health of elderly person was 56, the mean value of dimension suicide ideas was 55.3. the mean value of dimension tension of elderly person was 52.the mean value of dimension meaningfulness of elderly person was 52.33. the mean value of dimension occupation of elderly person was 53.the mean value of dimension finances of elderly person was 50.5. the mean value of dimension social relations of elderly person was 59.8.the mean value of life satisfaction of elderly person was 58.the mean value of dimension social support of elderly person was 55.5.the mean value of dimension self-esteem of elderly person was 60.the mean value of dimension General Efficiency of elderly person was 55 and the mean value of dimension spouses support of elderly person was 51.5. It reveals that dimensions social relations and self-esteem indicates high level of wellbeing of elderly persons and dimensions finances and spouses support have low level wellbeing of elderly persons.

**Table: 4 Value of N, Mean, SD and S. ED and t ratio computed for difference in the wellbeing of elderly persons with respect to Gender**

Gender	N	Mean	S. D	S. ED	t-value	Significance
Male	59	22.17	5.328	0.694	0.593	NS
Female	41	21.54	5.192	0.811		

Perusal of Table 4. revealed that calculated value of 't' is 0.593 which is not significant even at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, there is no difference in level of well-being of elderly persons with respect to Gender. the mean score of male elderly persons (22.17) is more than that of females (21.54) which means that males have high level of well-being in comparison to females of elderly persons. Hence the null hypothesis that there is no difference in the well-being of elderly persons on the basis of Gender (male and females) stands accepted.

**Table: 5 Value of N, Mean, SD, S. ED and t ratio computed for difference in the well-being of elderly persons with respect to literacy or level of education (literate / illiterate).**

Literacy	N	Mean	S. D	S. ED	t-value	Significance
Literate	50	23.16	6.08	0.859	2.44	SIG.
Illiterate	50	20.66	3.96	0.560		

Perusal of table 5 revealed that calculated value of t is 2.44 which significant even at 0.01 level of significance. Therefore, there is difference in the well-being of elderly Persons on the basis of literacy or level of education (literate/illiterate). the mean score of literate persons is 23.16 which is more than that of illiterate persons i.e. 20.66. It means that literate persons have high level of well-being in comparison to illiterate persons. Hence the null

## A Study of Well Being of Elderly Persons in Relation to Literacy

hypothesis that there is no difference in the level of well-being of elderly persons on the basis of literacy stands rejected.

### *Educational Implications*

In the present study, 4% of the elderly persons had very low level of well-being, 40% of the elderly persons had low level of well-being and another 45% elderly persons had average level of well-being and the only 11% elderly persons had high level of well-being. 44% of elderly persons were falling in the category of low and very low level of wellbeing so there is need to raise the level of well-being of elderly persons in order to raise the better standards of living. More over significant difference between the wellbeing of literate and illiterate persons also revealed that literate people had higher level of wellbeing therefore studying the well-being of elderly individuals in relation to literacy has several educational implications:

- **Promoting Lifelong Learning:** Understanding the connection between literacy and well-being in the elderly highlights the importance of promoting lifelong learning. Encouraging older adults to continue reading, learning, and improving their literacy skills can positively impact their overall well-being.
- **Tailored Literacy Programs:** Educators and policymakers can develop tailored literacy programs specifically designed for older adults. These programs should focus on improving reading and digital literacy skills to enhance their quality of life.
- **Mental Health and Cognitive Function:** Research on well-being may reveal that higher literacy levels are associated with better mental health and cognitive function in older adults. This knowledge can inform educational initiatives that aim to support mental well-being through literacy-based activities and interventions.
- **Access to Information:** Literacy enables elderly individuals to access information and resources more effectively, which can be crucial for their well-being. Educational institutions and community organizations can ensure that older adults have access to educational materials and technology to bridge any digital literacy gaps.
- **Intergenerational Learning:** Encouraging intergenerational learning can benefit both elderly individuals and younger generations. Programs that involve older adults in teaching or mentoring younger learners can foster a sense of purpose and connection, contributing to their well-being.
- **Assessment and Monitoring:** Educational institutions and healthcare providers may implement literacy assessments as part of routine check-ups for elderly individuals. This can help identify literacy-related issues early and provide appropriate support.
- **Policy Considerations:** Policymakers can use findings from studies on elderly well-being and literacy to inform policies related to adult education, retirement communities, and healthcare services. These policies can promote a more literate and well-supported aging population.
- **Community Engagement:** Communities can create spaces where older adults can engage in literacy-related activities, such as book clubs, writing groups, or digital literacy workshops. These activities can foster social connections and enhance well-being.
- **Digital Literacy:** Given the increasing importance of digital literacy in today's society, educational efforts should include training older adults in using technology and the internet. This empowers them to stay connected and access online resources related to health, finance, and social engagement.

## CONCLUSION

Studying the well-being of elderly individuals in relation to literacy underscores the significance of lifelong learning, tailored educational programs, and policies that support the literacy needs of older adults. These initiatives can have a positive impact on their overall well-being and quality of life.

## REFERENCES

- Plácido, A. I., Herdeiro, M. T., & Roque, F. (2022). Health and wellbeing in aging. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 19(14), 8835. Doi :10.3390/ijerph19148835.
- Sandell, K., & Öhman, J. (2013). An educational tool for outdoor education and environmental concern. *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning*, 13(1), 36–55. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14729679.2012.675146>
- Schoultz, M., Öhman, J., & Quennerstedt, M. (2020). A review of research on the relationship between learning and health for older adults. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 39(5–6), 528–544. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02601370.2020.1819905>
- Smith, J., Borchelt, M., Maier, H., & Jopp, D. (2002). Health and well-being in the young old and oldest old. *Journal of Social Issues*, 58(4), 715-732.
- Whitehead, M. (2010). *Physical literacy: Throughout the lifecourse*. Routledge.

### **Acknowledgment**

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

**How to cite this article:** Sharma, U. (2024). A Study of Well Being of Elderly Persons in Relation to Literacy. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 12(3), 2044-2050. DIP:18.01.201.20241203, DOI:10.25215/1203.201