

**IMPACT OF AGEING ON MENTAL HEALTH – A STUDY**
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**Abstract:**

Of late we are living in the modern world of technology, improved medical services and healthcare methodology. Alas, nature has set its own system of human life replenishment in order to balance the nature. As per the study by 2030, one in six people in the world will be aged 60 years or over. India is not exception to this Ageing cycle. It is revealed that comprising over 10% of India's population, older adults ageing may be 60+ is a growing concern, that may get victim of mental health problems.

**The India Ageing Report 2023** notes that by 2050, the share of senior citizens — aged 60 years and above — will rise to 20.8 per cent of the population. That is close to 347 million. This is a steep rise from the 2022 demographic of 149 million elderly persons, which was about 10.5 per cent of the country's population.

As per the report's projection by the end of the century, the elderly population in India is expected to make up over 36 per cent of the total population. This projection is also affirmed by the World Population Prospects 2022 report, which mentioned that the proportion of senior citizens will reach 36.1 per cent of the population of India by 2100, comprising more than 550 million people.

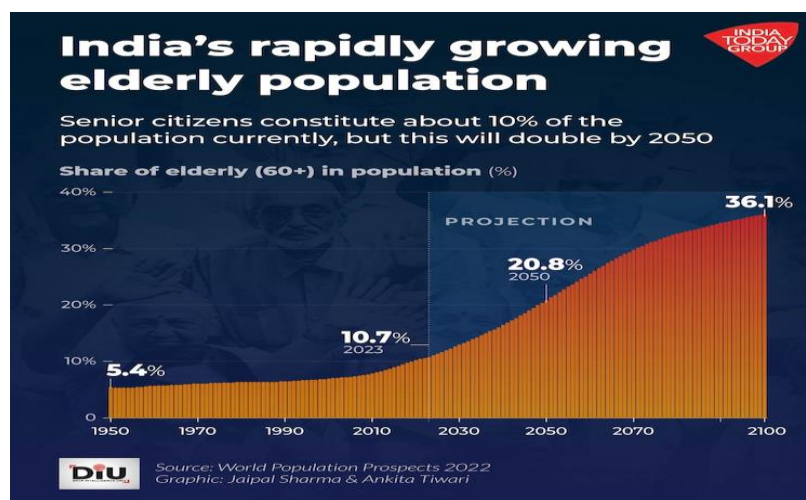
**Objectives of the study:** To assess the mental health status of older adults and explore possible ways of interventions to improve their mental health. of older adults.

**Research design:** A descriptive research design was utilized. The respondents were from urban area. A simple convenient sample of 50 older adult men and women were respondents.

**Results:** Relationship with family members has a low positive correlation (.330) with mental health of older adults, and the correlation is statistically significant at a moderate level ( $0.01 < P > 0.05$ ). Negative poor correlations have been established between mental health status and demographic variables like educational status and source of income. It's also reflected in the research study that there is a significant number of older adults with low mental health status.

**Recommendation:** A health education program for older adults about mental health is recommended. There is a need to raise awareness in the public and other professionals about the unmet needs of geriatric mental health, develop adequate human resources, and strengthen intersectoral collaboration.

**Keywords:** Aging, natural phenomena, mental health status, natures replenishment, balancing wellbeing ratio



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**Introduction:**

Ageing is a cascading natural phenomenon none is out of that cycle and it is consistent and perennial happening, the term of ageing known as older adults normally at the age of 60 years and above. The addition to the old aged citizen in India (older adult population) is increasing due to the following reasons.

- Food habits, life styles, work cultures and lot more adoption of unethical practices.
- Increased longevity, decline in fertility and compression of morbidity more particularly in urban areas.
- Being with improvements in health and medical care.
- Better living of standard and smaller families.
- As per above diagram we may end up this century by having 31 percent of old adult population.

As per our experience older adults becomes victim of numerous physical, psychological, social, and economic issues apart from the age-related mental health problems and environmental issues. As we know the study noted that, in India, these issues getting escalated because of our windfall urbanization, migration, disintegration of joint families, traditional community ties, fast-paced changes, independent choices made by children, and changes in the value system in modern industrial society.

Nonetheless our older adults try to manage, accommodate and assimilates to coup up their lives with socio-economic, cultural, physical, and health problems in their own way. However, managing the magnitude and balancing their situations depends on the individual capabilities, mindset, environment and their social-relationship backgrounds.

**What do you mean by Mental health:** As per the World Health Organization the health is, ‘A state of complete physical, mental, and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity’

The World Health Organization suggests that mental health should be considered as *a state of well-being and there is no health without good mental health*. The World Health Organization defines mental health as ‘a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and can contribute to his or her community’. Mental well-being is defined as a state in which individuals are aware of their abilities, are able to deal with stressful situations in life, are able to work productively and efficiently, and are beneficial to society.

A person’s mental health is affected by individual factors and experiences, the environment, and societal and cultural norms. Mental health is part of the general health, and several personal attributes contribute significantly to the mental health status of people. Change in lifestyle, retirement, financial insecurity, decline in physical and mental abilities, *feeling of being left alone, less social interactions can cause psychological distress on mental health issues*.

The Longitudinal Ageing Study of India (LASI), launched in 2016 by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, has conducted a full-scale national survey and a seminal study on the status of the ageing population in India. According to the survey,

- a. Almost 20% of the older adults in India have mental health issues, and almost a third of the older adult population exhibits depressive symptoms.
- b. Mental health conditions among older people are often underrecognized, undertreated and reluctant to seek help.

Therefore, it is necessary to recognize the importance of mental health concerns among older adults especially among the retired older. Hence it is but natural to create awareness about mental health issues among older adults, as well as among the caregivers, nursing and mental health professionals.

### Review of relevant studies:

Globally there are numerous studies on geriatric mental health, quality of life and life satisfaction among older adults.

Pragya Lodha, Avinash De Sousa (2018) wrote a review article on Geriatric mental health: The challenges for India. The article addresses the challenges before the clinician the various challenges faced by geriatric mental health. Articles that assessed geriatric mental health and its challenges in India were identified by the authors through searches of the PubMed, EMBASE, and Google Scholar databases for articles published in English between January 1995 and December 2017 in India in the current era. *The authors then reviewed the identified studies and were able to determine the general and specific challenges faced by geriatric mental health in India. Several social factors like retirement, financial issues, and parents in India and Children Abroad directly affect the mental health of the geriatric age groups.* Multiple social, psychological, and biological factors determine the level of mental health of a person at any point in time. Authors concluded that mental health problems are under-identified by health-care professionals and older people themselves, and the stigma surrounding mental illness makes people reluctant to seek help. It is suggested that older people face special physical and mental health challenges that need to be recognized. There is a need to raise awareness in the public and other professionals about the unmet needs of geriatric mental health, develop adequate human resources, and strengthen intersectoral collaboration.

Yousra Mohamed Ali Alawady et al (2023) conducted a research study on Life Satisfaction, Mental Wellbeing, and Social Participation Among Older adults. The objective of the study was to assess Life satisfaction, mental well-being, and social participation among older adults before and during covid COVID-19 pandemic. The study was conducted in a rural area

selected randomly from Sharkia Governorate, Egypt, and the sample comprised 300 older adults. The short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale was used to collect the data related to Mental Well-being. The total mean score of mental wellbeing among the studied older adults was  $20.95 \pm .52$  before covid COVID-19 pandemic compared to  $9.63 \pm 4.23$  during covid COVID-19 pandemic. Most people have a strong need for social relationships in which they find solidarity, affection, and connectedness. The study findings and researchers' recommendation were health education program for older adults about Life satisfaction, mental wellbeing, and social participation is necessary.

Thus, the study reveals that the mental health among older adults certainly a serious cause and health disorder. Hence addressing the same by educating the all-concern persons and professional is very essential.

### Objectives of the study:

1. To analyze the living conditions of the older adults.
2. To examine the mental health status of older adults.
3. To explore the factors affecting mental health status of older adults.
4. To suggest protective health practices.

### Research Methodology: -

This is descriptive research pertaining to the older adults. The respondents were older adult men and women. It is a random sample consist of 50 older adults aged 60 years or above, free from any physical, mental disorders, and able to communicate. The data collection was done through structured questionnaire, consisting of two parts.

- a) Part I Personal information: It consisted of demographic characteristics of the older adults, which include age, gender, age, educational level, marital status, the source of income, type of family, number of children, living style and relations with family members.

- b) Part II Mental Health Inventory of C. T. Veit and J. E. Ware, Jr., known as MHI-18 for the general population. It's mainly used to measure psychological distress, well-being, and also to evaluate the mental health status.
- c) The statistical tools used were for data entry MS Excel and for statistical analysis, tables, charts and other simple arithmetical formulas.

Table No. 1:

Demographic Classification of the Respondents (older adults)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	32	64.0
	Female	18	36.0
Age group	60-65 years	14	28.0
	65-70 years	22	44.0
	70-75 years	6	12.0
	75-80 years	5	10.0
	80 years & above	3	6.0
Education	Up to 12th Std	27	54.0
	Graduate	7	14.0
	Post-graduate	14	28.0
	Not educated	2	4.0
Marital status	Never married	3	6.0
	Married	45	90.0
	Widow/widower	1	2.0
	Separated	1	2.0
Source of income	Salary	9	18.0
	Pension	26	52.0
	Interest from savings	1	2.0
	Rent from Landed Property	14	28.0
<b>Overall</b>		<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Discussion:**

- a) Above table No.1 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents-older adults who participated in the study. It was found that two-thirds (64%) of the respondents of the research study were males, while 36% were female. It indicated that the male sample dominated the research study.
- b) Three-fourths (72%) of the respondents were young elders between the ages of 60 to 70 years that's more significant.
- c) The literacy rate among the older adults was moderate. They have either studied up to the 12th standard or completed their graduation.
- d) A significant proportion (90%) of the older adults were married and were living with their spouses. A small number of participants (6%) were never married.
- e) More than half (52%) were pensioners and depended on their monthly pension. 28% of the participants relied on rent from the landed property. It means only a moderate number of the older adults are financially independent and secure. And two-fifths (18%) were still working and drew regular salaries.

Table No. 2:

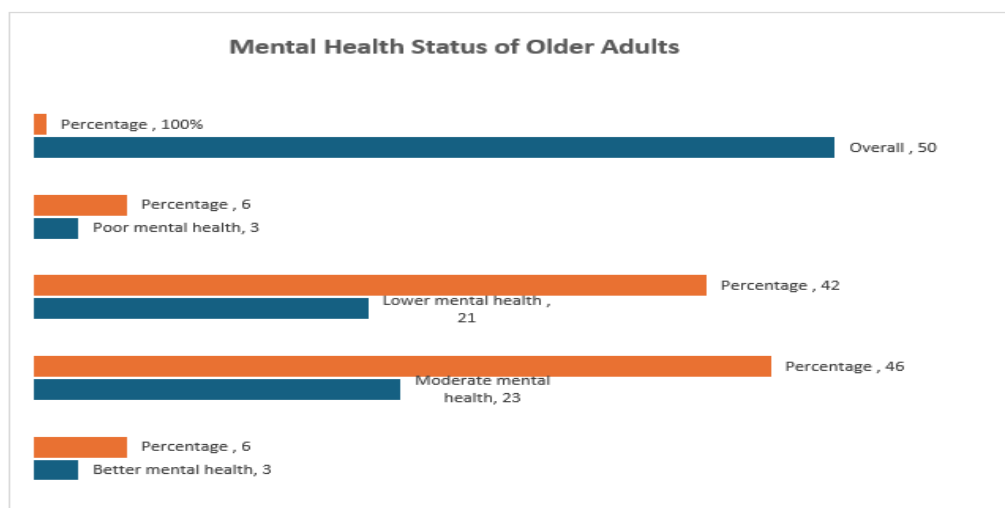
## Living Life Style of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Type of family	Joint	19	38.0
	Nuclear	31	62.0
Living status	With husband/wife	46	92.0
	Own Sons/daughters	3	6.0
	All above	1	2.0
Relationship with family members	Cordial	32	64.0
	Normal	15	30.0
	Uncordial & strained	3	6.0
<b>Overall</b>		<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Discussion:**

- In the above said table No. 2 it reveals the living style of respondents with family members. One-third (38%) of the participants were living in a joint family. This finding suggests that the joint family structure and living together with children or extended family members remained valued in the modern era. Whereas three fifths (62%) of the respondents are living in a nuclear family.
- The majority (92%) of the older adults were living with their husband or wife.
- Most of the respondents i.e. three-fifths (64%) of the respondents share cordial and healthy relationships with their family members, and 30% share normal relations with some tensions and stressful situations.

Table No. 3:

**Discussion:**

- In the above table No. 3, which depicts the mental health status of older adults. The most of the respondents were in moderate and lower levels of mental health status.
- Nearly half (46%) of the older adults indicated moderate mental health status and substantial proportion (42%) of older adults were found to have lower mental health status. It shows that substantial segment of the population experiencing significant mental health challenges.
- A relatively very low proportion (6%) of respondents reported better mental health, suggesting that psychological well-being is seldom found among older adults.

**Outcome of the study:**

1. As per the study a moderate level of mental health status among the older adults. But the main element is high level of education and awareness of the mental health concept and self-care practices. They keep themselves busy with their hobbies and socializing with people. They have a positive attitude towards aging and consider it an opportunity to live life to the fullest and make efforts to maintain sound physical health and mental well-being.
2. Respondents were found to have lower mental health status highlighting the multifaceted and complex challenges faced by older adults. The needs and problems of older adults vary significantly according to their age, socio-economic status, living status, health, and other characteristics.
3. The older adults reported that, due to their age-related illnesses like BP, Diabetes, knee problems, and heart problems, have restricted mobility, which causes loneliness, social isolation, and some mental health concerns.
4. Further the study reflects that, age, gender, marital status, type of family, and living style have a direct impact on the mental health of older adults. And living with spouse, strong correlation between family relationships is positively connected with higher levels of mental health and better quality of life.
5. Thus, research reveals that, family plays an important role in maintaining the well-being of older adults.

**Conclusion:**

The ageing in human being and living things is a but natural phenomenon, which is known as older adults. The ageing result into lack of physical and mental well-being due to improper support received from family members, persons and professional. The cascading of

ageing physical and mental, depend on environmental and social factors such as residential locality, neighborhood, friendships, physical health condition, and economic status etc. Multiple social, psychological, and biological factors determine the level of mental health of older adults. As mental health affects physical health, it's necessary to provide the required attention and treatment to the mental health conditions. It needs to be realized that the older adults and their related issues cannot be only addressed by the public or private sectors. It requires an integrated approach and strategies from social, legal, medical, and mental health professionals. Hence, as geriatric mental health is a growing concern, it has to be given more significance by policymakers, practitioners, academicians, and social work professionals.

**Protective Health Practices / Recommendations:**

Based on the study the following protective health practices rather recommendations are proposed,

- a. To improve positive mental health among older adults' social connection, social activities, engaging older adults physically and mentally, which will boost a sense of feeling and belongingness among them shall be need of hours.
- b. The support groups, namely senior citizen clubs, creative arts, prayer teams, recreation groups, table play groups also help to the elderly adults.
- c. A health education workshop for the older adults about numerous physiological changes that occur with age, life satisfaction, mental well-being, and social engagement shall be conducted.
- d. Along with above a good-quality and affordable health services, including mental health, shall be provided.

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