Chapter V

Discussion
DISCUSSION

This chapter contains a brief of the process of research adopted for this study and the major findings have been presented along with the outcome of the hypotheses formulated earlier. Finally a few suggestions have been offered on the basis of the findings.

The population of the aged in India is on the increase day by day. The distintegration of the traditional joint families and the economic inadequacy of the nuclear families have resulted in the neglect of its aged members. Even though the advancement of medical science has made the aged physically and mentally fit, they are refused employment beyond a chronological age limit. They experience a lot of psychological problems.

This study is an attempt to understand the problems that the rural and urban are aged people face in terms of their adjustment, depression, hopelessness/pessimism and life satisfaction. The significant association between various socio-demographic variables and the subject dimensions has also been studied. This study was carried out in the rural and urban areas of Tiruchirappalli District.

Given the nature of the study a descriptive cum diagnostic research design has been adopted. The research has covered 300 elderly people in rural and urban of Tiruchriappalli District.

The instruments used for investigation were a self prepared interview schedule for collection of socio-demographic information, Adjustment Problems Inventory for Older Persons (P.V.Ramamurti, 1968), Beek’s Depression Inventory (1988), Hopelessness Scale (Beck and Wiseman, 1974), Life Satisfaction Scale (Havighurst, 1971). The collected data were processed and analysed by applying statistical techniques such as chi-square, ’t’ test and Karl Pearson’s correlation co-efficient.
Salient Findings of the Study

I. Findings related to the Socio-Demographic Characteristics

1. Majority (76.3 percent) of the respondents were in the age group 60-70 years.
2. A sizeable majority (54.0 per cent) of the respondents were males.
3. A vast majority (96.3 per cent) of the respondents were married.
4. A majority (53.3 per cent) of the respondents were Hindu.
5. Majority (37.3 per cent) of the respondents were illiterate.
6. A majority (69.3 per cent) of the respondents were from joint families.
7. Nearly one third (27.3 per cent) of the respondents were government employees.
8. A vast majority (89.3 per cent) of the respondents were not working at time of the status.
9. Majority (93.3 per cent) of the respondents believe in God.
10. A vast majority (72.0 per cent) of the respondents do not spend time in reading religious books.

Findings related to Socio-Demographic characteristics (chi-square test)

When the urban and rural older persons were further categorized on the basis of their domicile as far as their gender is concerned, from Table 4, we find that majority of the female older persons (52.0 per cent) were in the urban whereas majority of the male older persons (60.0 per cent) were in the rural areas. When the association between domicile and gender level was tested using chi-square test, it is found to be statistically significant.

As far as their religion is concerned, from Table 4, we find that majority of the Hindu older persons (58.0 per cent) were in the urban whereas majority of the Hindu older persons (48.7 per cent) were in the rural areas. When the association between domicile and religion was tested using chi-square test, it is found to be statistically significant.
With regard to education, from Table 4, we find that majority of the 9-12th standard older persons (35.3 per cent) were in the urban whereas majority of the older persons (50.7 per cent) were illiterate in the rural areas. When the association between domicile and education qualification level was tested using chi-square test, it is found to be statistically significant.

Regarding the job, from Table 4, we find that majority of the older persons (43.3 per cent) were government employees in the urban whereas majority of the older persons (43.3 per cent) were farmers in the rural. When the association between domicile and nature of job level was tested using chi-square test, it is found to be statistically significant.

As far as their monthly income is concerned, from Table 4 we find that majority of the older persons (52.0 per cent) were earning above Rs. 2000 per month in the urban area whereas majority of the older persons (64.0 per cent) were earning upto Rs. 1000 per month in the rural areas. When the association between domicile and monthly income level was tested using chi-square test, it is found to be statistically significant.

With regard to the number of dependents of the family, from Table 4, we find that majority of the 4-6 categorized family members (58.0 per cent) were in the urban whereas majority of the 4-6 categorized family members (57.3 per cent) were in the rural areas. When the association between domicile and number of dependents of the family level was tested using chi-square test, it is found to be statistically significant.

Regarding present employment, from Table 4, we find that majority of the older persons (94.0 per cent) were not working at the time of the study in the urban whereas majority of the older persons (84.7 per cent) were not working in the rural areas. When the association between domicile and working now level was tested using chi-square test, it is found to be statistically significant.

II. Findings related to Gender-wise Comparison

As far as their education qualification level is concerned, from Table 9, we find that majority of the male older persons (56.8 per cent) were 9-12th standard
whereas majority of the female older persons (48.6 per cent) were illiterate. When the association between domicile and education qualification level was tested using chi-square test, it is found to be statistically significant.

With regard to the type of family, from Table 9, we find that majority of the male older persons (67.9 per cent) were from joint family whereas majority of the female older persons (71.0 per cent) were from joint family. When the association between domicile and type of family was tested using chi-square test, it is found to be statistically significant.

Regarding the nature of job, from table 9, we find that majority of the male older persons 41.4 per cent were government employees. Whereas majority of the female older persons (55.8 per cent) were involved in house work. When the association between domicile and nature of job was tested using chi-square test, it is found to be statistically significant.

As far as their monthly income is concerned, from Table 9, we find that majority of the male older persons (50.0 per cent) were earning above Rs. 2000 per month whereas majority of the female older persons (67.4 per cent) were earning upto Rs. 1000. When the association between domicile and monthly income level was tested using chi-square test, it is found to be statistically significant.

III. Findings related to Domicile and Gender wise Comparison (Urban Male Vs Rural Male)

As far as their age level is concerned, from Table 14, we find that majority of the urban older persons (54.2 per cent) were in the “young-old” category (age range from 60-70) whereas majority of the rural older persons (65.6 per cent) were in the old-old category (age range 70 years and above) and when the association between gender, domicile and age level was tested using chi-square test, it is found to be statistically significant.

With regard to their religion, from Table 14, we find that majority of the urban older persons (56.9 per cent) and majority of the rural older persons (51.1 per cent)
were Hindus. When the association between gender, domicile and religion level was tested using chi-square test, it is found to be statistically significant.

When the male respondents were further categorized on the basis of their domicile (rural vs urban), as far as their education qualification is concerned, from Table 14, we find that majority of the older persons (51.4 per cent) were in the 9-12th standard category in the urban area whereas majority of the older persons (45.6 per cent) were illiterate in the rural area. When the association between gender, domicile and education qualification was tested using chi-square test, it is found to be statistically significant.

As far as their type of family level is concerned, from Table 14, we find that majority of the older persons (62.5 per cent) were from joint family in the urban area whereas majority of the older persons (72.2 per cent) were from joint family in the rural area. When the association between gender, domicile and type of family was tested using chi-square test, it is found to be statistically significant.

Regarding their nature of job, from Table 14, we find that majority of the older persons (66.7 per cent) were government employee in the urban area whereas majority of the older persons (55.6 per cent) were farmers in the rural area. When the association between gender, domicile and nature of job was tested using chi-square test, it is found to be statistically significant.

With regard to their monthly income level, from Table 14, we find that majority of the older persons (81.9 per cent) were earning above Rs. 2000 in the urban area whereas majority of the older persons (51.1 per cent) were earning upto Rs. 1000 in the rural area. When the association between gender, domicile and monthly income was tested using chi-square test, it is found to be statistically significant.

As far as the number of dependents of family, from Table 14, we find that majority of the rural male older persons (50.0 per cent) and majority of the urban male older persons (55.6 per cent) were in the 4-6 category. When the association between gender, domicile and number of dependents level was tested using chi-square test, it is found to be statistically significant.
IV. Findings related to Domicile and Gender-wise Comparison (Urban Female Vs Rural Female)

When the female respondents were further categorized on the other basis of their domicile (rural vs urban), as far as their marital status level is concerned, from Table 19, we find that majority of the urban female older persons (92.3 per cent) and all the rural female older persons were married. When the association between gender, domicile and marital status was tested using chi-square test, it is found to be statistically significant.

As far as their nature of job is concerned, from Table 19, we find that majority of the older persons (61.5 per cent) were house workers in the urban area whereas a sizeable proportion of the older persons (48.3 per cent) were house workers in the rural area. When the association between gender, domicile and nature of job was tested using chi-square test, it is found to be statistically significant.

Regarding their monthly income level, from Table 19, we find that majority of the urban female older persons (55.1 per cent) were earning upto Rs. 1000 whereas a vast majority of the rural female older persons (83.3 per cent) were earning upto Rs. 1000 per month. When the association between gender, domicile and monthly income level was tested using chi-square test, it is found to be statistically significant.

With regard to their number of dependents of family level, from Table 19, we find that majority of the urban female older persons (43.6 per cent) and majority of the rural female older persons (60.0 per cent) were in the 4-6 category. When the association between gender, domicile and number of dependents level was tested using chi-square test, it is found to be statistically significant.

As far as their present employment is concerned, from Table 19, we find that majority of the urban female older persons (93.6 per cent) and majority of the rural female older persons (81.7 per cent) were not working at the time of the study. When the association between domicile and working now level was tested using chi-square test, it is found to be statistically significant.
V. Findings related to Age Category-wise Comparison (Young Old vs Old-Old)

When the respondents were further categorized on the basis of their domicile and stage of old age (young-old vs old-old) as far as their type of family level is concerned from Table 24 we find that majority of the younger older persons (62.2 per cent) and majority of the old-old persons (75.8 per cent) were found joint family. When the association between stage of old age and type of family level was tested using chi-square test, it is found to be statistically significant.

Regarding their present employment, from Table 24, we find that majority of the young old persons (85.3 per cent) and a vast majority of the old-old persons (93.0 per cent) were not working at the time of the study. When the association between stage of old age, present employment was tested using chi-square test, it is found to be statistically significant.

VI. Findings related to Depression Scale

1. Statistically significant difference have been found between urban and rural older persons with regard to the specific dimensions of depression such as sense of failure, dissatisfaction, guilt, expectation of punishment, self-dislike, suicidal ideas, crying, irritability, social withdrawal, fatigability, anorexia and loss of libido.

2. Statistically significant differences have been found between male and female older persons with regard to the specific dimensions of depression such as sense of failure, guilt, expectation of punishment, work retardation, insomnia, loss of libido and overall depression.

3. Statistically significant differences have been found between urban male and rural male older persons with regard to the specific dimensions of depression such as sense of failure, failure, guilt, expectation of punishment, suicidal ideas, crying, irritability, indecisiveness, insomnia, fatigability, anorexia, loss of libido, and overall depression score.
4. Statistically significant differences have been found between urban female and rural female older persons with regard to the specific dimensions of depression such as dissatisfaction guilt, expectation of punishment, crying irritability, social withdrawal, body image, and fatigability.

5. Statistically significant differences have been between young old and old-old persons with regard to the specific dimensions of depression of failure, guilt, suicidal ideas, body image, weight loss and overall depression.

VII. Findings related to Hopelessness Scale

1. Statistically significant differences have been found between urban and rural older persons with regard to the specific dimensions of hopelessness such as feeling about future, loss of motivation.

2. Statistically significant differences have been found between male and female older persons with regard to all the dimensions of hopelessness.

3. Statistically significant differences have been found between urban male and rural male older persons with regard to the specific dimension of hopelessness such as feeling about future and overall hopelessness.

4. Statistically significant differences have been found between urban female and rural female older persons with regard to the specific dimension of hopelessness namely feeling about future.

5. Statistically significant differences have been found between young-old and old-old persons with regard to the specific dimension of hopelessness namely 'feeling about future'.

VIII. Findings related to Adjustment Scale

1. Statistically significant differences have been found between urban and rural older persons with regard to the specific dimensions of adjustment such as health, emotional, self, home, social and overall adjustment.
2. Statistically significant differences have been found between male and female older persons with regard to their specific dimensions of adjustment such as health, emotional, home, social and overall adjustment.

3. Statistically significant differences have been found between urban male and rural male older persons with regard to the specific dimensions of adjustment such as health, emotional, home and overall adjustment.

4. Statistically significant differences have been found between urban female and rural female older persons with regard to the specific dimension of adjustment namely home.

5. Statistically significant differences have been found between young-old and old-old persons with regard to the all 5 specific dimensions such as health and overall adjustment.

IX. Findings related to Life-Satisfaction Scale:

1. Statistically significant difference has been found between urban and rural older persons with regard to their level of life satisfaction.

2. Statistically significant difference has been found between male and female older persons with regard to their level of life satisfaction.

3. Statistically significant difference has been found between urban male and rural male older persons with regard to their level of life-satisfaction.

4. Statistically significant difference has been found between urban female and rural female older persons with regard to their level of life satisfaction.

5. Statistically significant difference has been found between young-old and old-old persons with regard to the level of life satisfaction.
X. Findings related to Correlation Analysis

Urban Older Persons

Socio-Demographic Aspects

When we see the correlation among the all the variables pertaining to the urban older persons, particularly the socio-demographic variables of age, income, dependents, movable assets and immovable assets are found to be not significantly correlated with all the other variables with one or two exceptions.

Depression

Overall depression score of the urban older persons has been found to have highly significant positive correlation with many of the key variables covered by the study such as sadness, pessimism, sense of failure, self actuation, suicidal ideas, crying, irritability, social withdrawal, indecisiveness, body image, work retardation, insomnia, anorexia, weight loss, somatic pre occupation.

Hopelessness

Overall hopelessness score of the urban older persons has been found to have highly significant positive correlations with many of the key variables covered by the study such as dependents, indecisiveness, anorexia, health, emotional, home, social, overall adjustment. However, it is interesting to note that the sub dimension of depression namely fatigability is negatively correlated with the overall hopelessness and it is highly significant which indicated that as fatigability level is increase. Level of hopelessness is likely to come down and vice versa.

Adjustment

Overall adjustment score of the urban older persons has been found to have highly significant positive correlation with many of the key variables covered by the study such as movable asset pessimism, suicidal ideas, indecisiveness, body image, fatigability, anorexia, overall depression, health, emotional, self, home, social.
Rural Older Persons

Socio-Demographic Aspects

Among the rural older persons, the socio-demographic variable of income is found to have highly significant correlation with many of the dimensions of Beek depression scale and adjustment problem inventory whereas income is not significant correlated with the key variables of the study. Among the urban respondents, many of the correlations are in the negative direction. This clearly shows that depression, hopelessness adjustment and life-satisfaction of older persons are to a very great extent influenced by their income.

Depression

Overall depression score of the rural older persons has been found to have highly significant positive correlation with many of the key variables covered by the study such as sadness, pessimism, sense of failure, Guilt, expectation of punishment, self-dislike, suicidal ideas, crying, social withdrawal, insomnia, fatigability, anorexia, weight loss, somatic pre occupation and loss of libido. However it is interesting to note that the socio demographic variable of income is negatively correlated with the overall depression and it is highly significant which indicates that as income increases level of depression is likely to come down and vice-versa.

Hopelessness

Overall hopelessness score of the rural older persons has been found to have highly significant positive correlation with many of the key variables covered by the study such as sadness, pessimism, self-dislike, social withdrawal, fatigability, overall depression, emotional, self, social and overall adjustment.

Overall Adjustment

Overall adjustment score of the rural older persons has been found to have highly significant positive correlation with many of the key variables covered by the study such as sadness, pessimism, sense of failure, guilt, expectation of punishment, social withdrawal, work retardation, insomnia, overall depression, health, emotional, self, home and social adjustment. However, it is interesting to note that the socio-demographic of the income is negatively correlated with the overall adjustment and it
is highly significant which indicates that as income increase level of adjustment is likely to come down and vice versa.

**Overall Life- Satisfaction**

Overall Life- Satisfaction score of the rural older persons has been found to have highly significant negative correlation with many of the key variables covered by the study such as income, dependents, sadness, pessimism, sense of failure, guilt, expectation of punishment, indecisiveness, work retardation, insomnia, weight loss, overall depression, health, emotional, home, overall adjustment.

**Findings related to Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant difference between urban and rural older persons with regard to the level of depression.

2. There is no significant difference between urban and rural older persons with regard to the level of hopelessness.

3. There is a significant difference between urban and rural older persons with regard to the level of adjustment.

4. There is a significant difference between urban and rural older persons with regard to the level of life satisfaction.

5. There is a significant difference between male and female older persons with regard to the level of depression.

6. There is no significant difference between male and female older persons with regard to the level of hopelessness.

7. There is a significant difference between male and female older persons with regard to the level of adjustment.

8. There is a significant difference between male and female older persons with regard to the level of life satisfaction.
9. There is a significant difference between urban male and rural male older persons with regard to the level of depression.

10. There is a significant difference between urban male and rural male older persons with regard to the level of hopelessness.

11. There is a significant difference between urban male and rural male older persons with regard to the level of adjustment.

12. There is a significant difference between urban male and rural male older persons with regard to the level of life satisfaction.

13. There is no significant difference between urban female and rural female older persons with regard to the level of depression.

14. There is no significant difference between urban female and rural female older persons with regard to the level of hopelessness.

15. There is no significant difference between urban female and rural female older persons with regard to the level of adjustment.

16. There is no significant difference between urban female and rural female older persons with regard to the level of life satisfaction.

17. There is a significant difference between young-old person and old-old persons with regard to the level of depression.

18. There is no significant difference between young-old person and old-old persons with regard to the level of hopelessness.

19. There is a significant difference between young-old person and old-old persons with regard to the level of adjustment.

20. There is a significant difference between young-old person and old-old persons with regard to the level of life satisfaction.
Findings of the Present Study in relation to Earlier Studies

The researcher made an attempt to relate the major findings of the present study with the findings of earlier studies. Even though there were not many studies specifically related to the key variables of the present investigation, it was possible to relate the findings with a few earlier studies which were directly relevant.

Hamen and Padesky (1977) have found that difficulty in decision making also seems to be common symptoms of depression. This is quite similar to the researcher’s findings since 84 % per cent of the respondents are low in decision making.

Martin and David (1984), in their study on older persons in the United States had found out that female older persons were significantly more depressed than the males but the findings of the present study contradict the above finding since majority of the female older persons were found to be having a low level of depression than the male older persons.

As far as social dimension of adjustment is concerned, the present study has found out that majority of older persons had moderate level of social adjustment. But an earlier study by Hassain and Kapur (1981) has brought out the finding that majority of the older people had greater social adjustment.

In the dimension of emotional adjustment also, the present study contradicts the earlier study of Singh et al. (1983) in that majority of the respondents of the present study had a moderate level of emotional adjustment whereas Singh et al reported a greater level of emotional adjustment.

The present study has found out that majority of female older persons had moderate level of adjustment problems. This finding contradicts the findings of Nair(1989) and Subramaniyan (1990) who reported more adjustment problems among female older persons.

With regard to life-satisfaction, the findings of the present study are in conformity with findings of Devasena (1997) in that both the studies have found out that life-satisfaction is higher among urban male older persons when compared to urban female older persons.
Suggestions

Based on the researchers' frequent visits to the rural and urban areas where the data were collected using observation and interaction with the older people and based on the findings that have emerged from this study, a few suggestions for implementation are hereby offered.

Singh (1970) has discussed the role of social scientists in the field of gerontology. He has described the problems after retirement as multifarious: greater economic deprivation, disturbed routine, utilization of time through economically non-rewarding activities, loss of social status and prestige in general and particularly in the family. He also suggests that in old age, people should be socialized for their physical activities. For this, he argues that socialization of the old people will differ from the west as in the Indian setting old people differ in their rural-urban, occupational, educational and cultural background. The social scientists should take up the social domain for filling the gap due to the role loss.

Since the present study has found out that majority at the older persons in most of the categories were having moderate level of hopelessness and depression, the research suggests counselling intervention with older persons. Counselling centres can offer specialised counselling services to the older persons in their areas of operation counsellor can help. Counsellors can help the older persons on an individual basis by offering counseling services to help them to overcome their emotional problems. They need to be helped to lower their feelings of pessimism and depression and enhance their sense of life-satisfaction.

Since majority of the older persons experience moderate level of hopelessness and depression and moderate level of adjustment and life-satisfaction, professional social workers can help the older persons by offering them, regular group work activities on issues of common interest besides enabling them to share their problems and offer psychological support to one another which could have immense therapeutic benefits. The social worker can further liaison with other organizations and implement programmes for the welfare of the older persons. Mutual acceptance of the aged and the young need to be fostered by arranging innovative and creative inter-generational programmes.
Suggestions to the NGO Sector

The resources of NGOs and service clubs can be mobilized for providing health care, recreational activities and day care services can be established to cater to the needs of the older persons. NGOs and service clubs have the advantage of planning independently to carry out innovative and creative project activities. They are also known for their high level professionalism and quality services. The major need of older persons in the study area is day care programme since majority of older persons have nothing worthwhile to do which makes them fell hopeless and depressed. Older people living in same area can form themselves into an association or club for the sake of recreation. It will also be very beneficial to the older persons and to the societies if older persons involve themselves in social services or welfare activities and even in systematic development work.

Suggestions to the Government

Well being of the older persons has been mandated in the constitution of India. List II of schedule VII of the constitution says that social security is the current responsibility of the central and state governments. Item 9 of state list and item 20, 23 and 24 of the concurrent list relate to provision of old age pension, social security, social insurance, economic and social planning and relief to the disabled and the unemployed.

The Government of India has brought out a very comprehensive policy concerning older persons. It has also created the necessary, institutional mechanism, systems and procedures. There is a National level counsel for older persons and ADHAR, a system to receive suggestions and grievances relating to the older persons inorder to do the needful. The NPOP also has provisions for grand- in- aid schemes for the NGOS to the run service projects for older persons including old age homes and daycare programmes. However, the progress in implementing the various schemes for the older persons has been rather slow and it is also not uniform all over the country. Better elder care services are found in metropolitan and major cities and benefits have not percolator to the grassroot level. Efforts can be taken up by the Government to see that quality elder care services are uniformly and effectively offered all over the country. The government needs to ensure that proper monitoring and supervision of older care services are done at all levels.
Suggestions for Future Studies

1. Research studies in the country lack in some of the ageing problems of widowhood, physically and mentally disabled, aged and the most important investigation which needs special mention is studying the aged in their changing family structure. It is essential that more and more researches aim at developing and evolving a deeper sociological theory about the ageing population of the country.

2. Comparative studies can be done on rural and urban older people to study variations in psychological status between the two groups.

3. Other psychological parameters such as feelings of insecurity, extent of self-esteem and dependency, anxiety, neuroticism, etc., can be taken up for further research.

4. Studies focussing exclusively on special categories of old people such as those with Alzheimer’s disease could be carried out.

5. Suicidal intent, feelings of alienation and perceived social support among the older persons are some of the one other aspects which could be explored.

Limitations of the Study

Some of the tools used by the research were lengthy consisting of hundreds of items, which probably might have affected the responses given by the respondents. The researcher feels that fatigue might have affected the quality of data obtained with the help of a few instruments. However, the researcher feels that this limitation might have had a very negligible impact. Secondly, in the present study, the researcher has described the characteristics of older persons and their level of depression, hopelessness and adjustment, life-satisfaction, and the association among these variables. However, the impact of each of the key variables on other variables could not be established due to methodological limitations. An experimental study would have been able to attempt that kind of analysis. Since the respondents were categorised mainly into dichotomous groups such as male, female and rural versus urban and young-old versus old-old, advanced statistical techniques such as ANOVA
and other multivariate methods could not be used by the researcher. Statistical analysis had to be restricted to non-parametric tests such as chi-square and parametric tests such as student's 't' test and correlation analysis.

Another important of the present study is that three out of four rating scales used by the researcher have been developed, normed and standardised by western authors in their context. There have not been many attempts to validate these rating scales in the Indian context by developing norms for Indian population. However, to overcome this limitation, the researcher himself has tested the reliability of the scales using the data collected for the present study. The reliability estimates were quite satisfactory.

Considering the nature of the present study and sampling procedure followed, we need to be conscious of the fact that generalizations can be made only with reference to the elderly population of Tiruchirappalli district only. The findings of the study may not be valid for elderly population in other cultures, even for the elderly in north India.

Conclusion

In the present study, the researcher has made a humble attempt initially, to find out some of the important socio-demographic characteristics of older persons living in the rural and urban areas of Tiruchirappalli district. As a second step, the researcher has assessed the level of four key variables (2 positive and 2 negative) such as adjustment, life satisfaction, hopelessness and depression. The study has revealed that majority of the older persons irrespective of their domicile, gender and stage of old age, have been found to be experiencing moderate levels of hopelessness, depression and adjustment. Urban older persons are found to be having a higher level of life satisfaction, when compared to rural older persons. Despite the methodological limitations of a descriptive-cum-diagnostic research study, the present investigation has thrown some light on some of the key variables among the older persons while attempting to analyse differences across different specific categories of older persons. This study, it is hoped, will provide a good basis for more systematic and scientific research relating to social and psychological aspects of old age.