SUMMARY

The Indian society in the past three to four decades is going through a revolution by the influence of so many variables with the result the conventional values and social institutions like marriage and family have transformed into widening a gap between generations. Getting old is a common experience which is collectively shared by the majority of people as a result it imposes new confrontations for family, community and society at large to safeguard the physical, social, emotional and financial requirements of the elderly. Old age can be defined as decreased physical strength and vigour, diminished mental capability, declined social and economic activities and dependence for financial, social, physical and emotional support. “Old age is called ‘dark’ not because the light fails to shine but because people refuse to see it” (Gowri 2003).

Due to stress and demands of society every individual has difficulties in every phase of life. But the problems or difficulties faced by old people have constantly been an area of concern. Adjustment is one of the problems as physically and emotionally the elderly experience many stresses, crisis and losses in addition to their need to cope with a devalued status. In order to satisfy the personal, social and other kinds of needs the elderly people have to make expected kind of adjustments which sometimes they are not able to adhere to cause difficulties in their lives. They are expected to live according to the expectations of adult children, his family and others which should not beyond the structure of life provided to them. Due to degeneration and advancement in age it becomes difficult to keep pace with the younger generation. Moreover they experience age-related losses which hamper the grip of social relationships. Their inability to participate in cultural and community activities results in a higher incidence of loneliness.

Sometimes due to lack of activity, vigour, vitality, strength and mobilization, the elderly people feel helpless as they are not able to move around and look for someone to take them along. Many a times due to development of some chronic health problems the elderly have to struggle hard to adjust to those developments making them helpless. Thus hopelessness, helplessness, dependency, exploitation and maltreatment among elderly people forced them to think of dying or being dead. In old age, people more often deal with the probability of their own death as well as the death of their near and dear ones.
thus have death anxiety. As the age progresses, the problems of depression prevail among
the elderly because sensory processes get weakened with age and limit the activities of
the aged to make them dependent on others for each and every task. Elderly people are
more vulnerable to depression as they are liable to experience several losses and stresses.
Bereavement is another major area in which the aged people experience helpless. The
loss of spouse amongst them is the chief irreparable loss which shatters them to be in the
condition of depression.

At the international level, the plan of action on aging is materializing but very little is
actually done to alleviate the conditions of the aged in India. The challenges and
problems of elderly people are in abundance hence is a rich area for investigation of
variables like adjustment, loneliness, helplessness, death anxiety and depression among
elderly people. There is an urgent need to focus on these issues. In the current research
these issues have been undertaken among male and female elderly people who are in two
age groups and who are cohabitating and who are not. Thus the following study problem
has been worked out.

PROBLEM

“To study adjustment, loneliness, helplessness, death anxiety and depression
among elderly people”.

OBJECTIVES

1. To assess and compare the adjustment of elderly people who are older old
   (65-74 years) and who are oldest old (75-84 years).
2. To assess and compare the adjustment of elderly people living with family and
   elderly people living without family.
3. To assess the gender differences on adjustment among elderly people.
4. To determine the interactive effects of age, living arrangements and gender on
   adjustment among elderly people.
5. To assess and compare the loneliness of elderly people who are older old and
   who are oldest old.
6. To assess and compare the loneliness of elderly people living with family and elderly people living without family.
7. To assess the gender differences on loneliness among elderly people.
8. To determine the interactive effects of age, living arrangements and gender on loneliness among elderly people.
9. To assess and compare the helplessness of elderly people who are older old and who are oldest old.
10. To assess and compare the helplessness of elderly people living with family and elderly people living without family.
11. To assess the gender differences on helplessness among elderly people.
12. To study the interactive effects of age, living arrangements and gender on helplessness among elderly people.
13. To assess and compare the death anxiety of elderly people who are older old and who are oldest old.
14. To assess and compare the death anxiety of elderly people living with family and elderly people living without family.
15. To assess the gender differences on death anxiety among elderly people.
16. To study the interactive effects of age, living arrangements and gender on death anxiety among elderly people.
17. To assess and compare the depression of elderly people who are older old and who are oldest old.
18. To assess and compare the depression of elderly people living with family and elderly people living without family.
19. To assess the gender differences on depression among elderly people.
20. To determine the interactive effects of age, living arrangements and gender on depression among elderly people.

Keeping into account the above aims and objectives the following hypotheses were framed.
HYPOTHESES

1. There would be significant difference on adjustment between elderly people who are older old and elderly who are oldest old.
2. The adjustment of elderly people living with family would be better than elderly living without family.
3. There would be significant gender differences on adjustment among the elderly people.
4. There would be a possibility of obtaining significant interactive effects of age, living arrangement and gender on adjustment among elderly people.
5. There would be significant difference on loneliness between elderly people who are older old and elderly who are oldest old.
6. The elderly people who are living with family would score low on loneliness than elderly living without family.
7. There would be significant gender differences on loneliness among the elderly people.
8. There would be a possibility of obtaining significant interactive effects of age, living arrangement and gender on loneliness among elderly people.
9. There would be significant difference on helplessness between elderly people who are older old and elderly who are oldest old.
10. The elderly people who are living with family would score low on helplessness than elderly living without family.
11. There would be significant gender differences on helplessness among the elderly people.
12. There would be a possibility of obtaining significant interactive effects of age, living arrangement and gender on helplessness among elderly people.
13. There would be significant difference on death anxiety between elderly people who are older old and elderly who are oldest old.
14. There would be significant difference on death anxiety between elderly people who are living with family and elderly living without family.
15. There would be significant gender differences on death anxiety among the elderly people.
16. There would be a possibility of obtaining significant interactive effects of age, living arrangement and gender on death anxiety among elderly people.
17. There would be significant difference on depression among the elderly who are older old and who are oldest old.
18. The elderly people who are living with family would score low on depression than elderly living without family.
19. Female elderly would score more on depression than male elderly.
20. There would be a possibility of obtaining significant interactive effects of age, living arrangement and gender on depression among elderly people.

**DESIGN**
In the current study 2x2x2 factorial design was employed. The elderly people were in either of two levels of age i.e. 65- 74 years (older old) and 75- 84 years (oldest old), having either of two types of living arrangements i.e. living with family and living without family and having either of two categories of gender i.e. male and female, these are three independent variables. The dependent variables are adjustment, loneliness, helplessness, death anxiety and depression.

**SAMPLE**
A purposive sample of 400 urban community dwelling elderly that were in the age range of 65- 84 years both males and females was selected on the basis of their availability. These 400 elderly people were divided into eight groups. The current sample was selected from Haryana state.

**TOOLS**
The tools given below were administered to the selected sample:

1. Personal data sheet
2. Shamshad Jasbir Old Age Adjustment Inventory
3. The Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale
4. Learned Helplessness Scale (LHS)
5. Death Anxiety Scale- Extended
6. Geriatric Depression Scale- Hindi Version
PROCEDURE
The current study focused on assessing adjustment patterns, loneliness, helplessness, death anxiety and depression among elderly people. The above mentioned scales were translated into Hindi which was followed by back translation. Appropriate and suitable instructions were given for every scale to each elderly person. After the data was collected, the scoring was done according to the norms given in the respective manuals and was analyzed using SPSS- version 16 Microsoft software. The data collected was analyzed by using suitable statistical methods such as descriptive analysis in the form of mean, S.Ds, inferential analysis in the form three-way ANOVA and the graphical presentation wherever applicable.

MAJOR FINDINGS

1. Significant difference was found on adjustment between elderly people who are older old and elderly who are oldest old.

2. No significant difference was evident on the adjustment of elderly people living with family and elderly living without family.

3. No gender differences were found on adjustment among the elderly people.

4. It was hypothesized that there would be a possibility of obtaining significant interactive effects of age, living arrangement and gender on adjustment among elderly people was not confirmed as:
   
i) No significant interactive effect between age and living arrangement (AxB) on adjustment among elderly people was observed.
   
ii) No significant interactive effect between living arrangement and gender (BxC) on adjustment among elderly people was found.
   
iii) No significant interactive effect between age and gender (AxC) on adjustment among elderly people was noticed.
   
iv) No significant interactive effect among age, living arrangement and gender (AxBxC) on adjustment among elderly people was obtained.
5. Significant difference was observed on loneliness between the elderly people who are older old and elderly who are oldest old.

6. The elderly people who are living with family scored low on loneliness than elderly living without family.

7. Significant gender differences were evidenced on loneliness among the elderly people.

8. It was hypothesized that there would be a possibility of obtaining significant interactive effects of age, living arrangement and gender on loneliness among elderly people was partially confirmed as:
   i) Significant interactive effect between age and living arrangement (AxB) on loneliness among elderly people was obtained.
   ii) No significant interactive effect between living arrangement and gender (BxC) on loneliness among elderly people was observed.
   iii) No significant interactive effect between age and gender (AxC) on loneliness among elderly people was found.
   iv) No significant interactive effect among age, living arrangement and gender (AxBxC) on loneliness among elderly people was obtained.

9. Significant difference was evidenced on helplessness between the elderly people who are older old and elderly who are oldest old.

10. The elderly people who are living with family scored low on helplessness than elderly living without family.

11. Significant gender differences were evidenced on helplessness among the elderly people.

12. It was hypothesized that there would be a possibility of obtaining significant interactive effects of age, living arrangement and gender on helplessness among elderly people was partially confirmed as:
   i) Significant interactive effect between age and living arrangement (AxB) on helplessness among elderly people was noticed.
ii) No significant interactive effect between living arrangement and gender (BxC) on helplessness among elderly people was found.

iii) No significant interactive effect between age and gender (AxC) on helplessness among elderly people was noticed.

iv) No significant interactive effect among age, living arrangement and gender (AxBxC) on helplessness among elderly people was obtained.

13. No significant difference was found on death anxiety between elderly people who are older old and elderly who are oldest old.

14. Significant difference was evident on death anxiety between elderly people who are living with family and elderly living without family.

15. Significant gender differences were found on death anxiety among the elderly people.

16. It was hypothesized that there would be a possibility of obtaining significant interactive effects of age, living arrangement and gender on death anxiety among elderly people was partially confirmed as:

i) No significant interactive effect between age and living arrangement (AxB) on death anxiety among elderly people was found.

ii) Significant interactive effect between living arrangement and gender (BxC) on death anxiety among elderly people was found.

iii) Significant interactive effect between age and gender (AxC) on death anxiety among elderly people was observed.

iv) Significant interactive effect among age, living arrangement and gender (AxBxC) on death anxiety among elderly people was obtained.

17. Significant difference was found on depression among the elderly people who are older old and who are oldest old.

18. The elderly people who are living with family scored low on depression than elderly living without family.

19. Female elderly people scored more on depression than male elderly people.
20. It was hypothesized that there would be a possibility of obtaining significant interactive effects of age, living arrangement and gender on depression among elderly people was partially confirmed as:

i) Significant interactive effect between age and living arrangement (AxB) on depression among elderly people was observed.

ii) Significant interactive effect between living arrangement and gender (BxC) on depression among elderly people was found.

iii) No significant interactive effect between age and gender (AxC) on depression among elderly people was noticed.

iv) No significant interactive effect among age, living arrangement and gender (AxBxC) on depression among elderly people was obtained.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Though the existing research investigation puts forward a potential representation of chief findings regarding the adjustment, loneliness, helplessness, death anxiety and depression among elderly people yet each one of the studies have a few drawbacks and limitations which restrained it to some limited clarifications.

- Since the present investigation is restricted to urban community dwelling elderly people therefore the findings cannot be generalized to rural elderly people.

- The other demographic variables such as socio-economic status, income, education, etc. have not been studied which might play important role in analyzing adjustment, loneliness, helplessness, death anxiety and depression among elderly people. Further research in this direction is required to widen the findings of the study.

- For determining differences in age, living arrangement and gender the elderly in all groups should be equivalent in all respects.

- Another potential limitation was that there is a possibility of responses of some of the elderly gets affected in the presence of adult children, daughters- in- law and grandchildren.
As the current research uses the quantitative data, the information gathered was dependent upon the responses given on the basis of different tests to underline the statistical consistency, it is better to make use of qualitative techniques as well to achieve the better understanding of the concepts involved in the current research to improve the validity of the study.

In spite of the above drawbacks the present investigator considers that the research results have both clinical significance and methodological implications.

**IMPLICATIONS**

The present research investigation has facilitated in identifying different problems faced by the elderly people. It proposes a trend for further research in this direction. The study emphasizes upon the roles, responsibilities, moral duties and obligations of younger generation toward older generation. And in return the elderly should acknowledge the contributions rendered by younger generation and should support, cooperate and help them through their wisdom, experience and knowledge. There is a strong need to safeguard the rights of elderly people so that they can lead to an empowered, successful and meaningful life. There is a need for leisure counseling for elderly people which can help them to plan and manage their leisure to maximize their enjoyment and to get rid of their social isolation, loneliness, helplessness and depression. The study lays down the message that psychologists and other social scientists should make an effort to develop some training programs that help elderly people to learn how to adjust well and how to age successfully and nobly so that they should not feel passive, lonely, withdrawn, secluded, helpless and depressed. It is imperative to make the lives of elderly more historic and enjoyable by preserving and enhancing the lives and capabilities of the elderly physically, psychologically and socially.