CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter contains the summary, the major findings, tenability of the hypotheses and implications of the present research.

Old age, the last phase of one’s life, is one of the most difficult stages of life both physically and mentally. This is mainly due to the general decline of health and physiological functioning and chronic illness, deteriorating functional capacities of the muscles and the sense organs, and problems with memory and other cognitive functions. Added to these are the increasing financial dependence, lack of opportunities and inability for social contacts, and the pains of isolation and bereavement due to the departure/death of loved ones, especially life partners and friends.

Due to the advances made in the field of technology and medicine, there occurred a tremendous increase in the life span of individuals all over the world during the last five decades, resulting in dramatic changes in the demographic profiles of most countries. There occurred a tremendous increase in the number and percentage of elderly people all over the world, which posed in serious psychosocial challenges. Though increase in life span is desired and welcomed by all, most societies are not well equipped to meet the psychosocial and economic challenges raised by this phenomenon. This is particularly true in India; we had a tremendous increase in the percentage of the aged people in our population and it is increasing at an alarming rate.
Along with this, we are also witnessing thorough changes in our family system, which may also add to the challenges raised by the other problems confronted by the aged. Joint and large families have paved the way to single and smaller families. Speed and noise of urban life are encroaching the serenity of village life. Unlike in older times, people have less time to spend at home and care for the elderly. Consequently, old age homes are coming up more and more as if it is the only option. These shifts in the pattern of life and roles have serious impacts on the elderly people, which neither the society or governments nor the social scientists could ignore.

The life of the aged people are becoming more and more miserable that there is a growing dissatisfaction among the older generation that they are not taken care of, as they deserve. Ours was a society which gave prime value and respect to the words and decisions of the elderly people. Central status was given to the elderly people at homes in all matters, whether it is related to food, leisure, financial matters and policy decisions. But today a total reversal has taken place in our families as far as the care, respect and affection given to the elderly people are concerned.

As in most other matters, we are imitating the westerners and have no hesitation in neglecting our aged parents and abandoning them in old age homes, which is a recent emerging trend in our society. We are witnessing the coming up of large number of old age homes everywhere in our state as a profitable business.
The increase that have occurred in the percentage of aged people in our society and the changes that are occurring in the treatment of the aged, both at families and outside, have led to an increase in the problems encountered by the elderly, challenging their adjustment ability in the different areas of life. The problems posed cannot be met either by individuals, families or society and government alone. But it should become a priority concern for all, especially for social scientists, psychologists, counselors and gerontologists. So, the present study was an attempt to understand the adjustment problems of the elderly people in different areas of their life like health, home, social, marital, emotional and financial adjustment; to examine the feelings of alienation experienced by the elderly and to enquire into their materialistic-spiritualistic orientation. A comparison of the elderly persons who are residing with their families and those who are staying in old age homes, with the above objectives, was made in this study.

The primary objectives of the study were:

1. To examine the major problems confronted by the aged persons as evidenced in the areas of health, home, social, marital, emotional, and financial adjustment, as well as their overall adjustment.

2. To find out whether there are significant differences between the aged persons staying in old age homes and those staying in their own homes, in the following:
   e) the six different areas of old age adjustment and in overall adjustment;
   f) the five components of alienation and in total alienation;
   g) the six components of materialism-spiritualism and in total materialistic-spiritualistic orientation.
h) the degree of perceived support from the ten significant sources and in total perceived support.

3. To find out the impact of relevant socio-demographic variables [sex; economic dependence vs. independence; religion; marital status; educational status] on the different variables of old age adjustment, alienation, and materialistic-spiritualistic orientation of the aged persons.

4. To find out the relationships between age and adjustment status among the aged persons.

5. To find out the relationships between age and feelings of alienation among the aged persons.

6. To find out the relationships between age and materialism-spiritualism orientation among the aged persons.

7. To find out the relationships between perceived support and adjustment status among the aged persons.

8. To find out the relationships between adjustment status and feelings of alienation among the aged persons.

9. To find out the relationships between adjustment status and materialism-spiritualism orientation among the aged persons.

10. To find out the relationships between feelings of alienation and materialism-spiritualism orientation among the aged persons.

Pursuant to the above objectives, 26 hypotheses were proposed for the study and these were tested on a randomly selected sample of 383 aged persons, out of which 232 aged persons are staying in old age homes, while the remaining 151 are residing in their own families.
Only questionnaire measures were used in the study. All the tests used have well-established psychometric properties. These included:

1. The Old Age Adjustment Inventory (Hussain and Kaur, 1995)
2. The Alien Inventory (Gireesan and Sananda Raj, 1988)
3. The Mathew Materialism-Spiritualism Scale (Mathew, 1973)
4. The Personal Data Sheet.

The collected data were analysed using SPSS and the statistical techniques employed were:

1. Frequency and percentage
2. Mean and Standard deviation
3. ‘t’ test
4. ANOVA and Scheffe’s post hoc test
5. Pearson’s product - moment correlation.

. **Major Findings:**

- The aged persons residing with their families had better adjustment status than those staying in old age homes, in all the six areas of adjustment and in overall adjustment.

- Comparisons of the mean scores obtained by the respondents in old age adjustment, with the norms indicate that while the aged persons residing in old age homes are very much lower (percentile scores below 10 in most cases) than the standardization sample; those residing in their families have
mean scores above that of 55 percentage of the standardization sample in most areas of adjustment.

- The aged persons staying in old age homes have significantly greater feelings of alienation than those residing in their own homes.
- The aged persons staying in old age homes have significantly higher mean scores in the subscales of religion, spirits, and character than those staying in their families, while the latter group has significantly higher mean scores in the subscales of God and mysticism. The differences between the two groups are not significant in psi and in total score. The overall results indicate that the aged persons dwelling in old age homes are slightly more spiritualistic than their counterparts staying in own homes.
- The elderly persons residing in their families have greater degree of perceived support from all the ten sources examined and in total support than those staying in old age homes.
- The male elderly persons enjoy better degree of adjustment than their female counterparts in all the six areas of adjustment and in overall adjustment.
- There are no sex differences among the aged persons in their feelings of alienation.
- The female aged persons are, in general, more spiritualistic in their orientation than their male counterparts.
- The economically independent elderly persons have better old age adjustment than the economically dependent persons in all the six areas of adjustment and in overall adjustment.
• The economically dependent aged persons have greater feelings of alienation than the economically independent persons in most of the components of alienation and in total alienation.

• The economically independent aged persons are more spiritualistically oriented than the economically dependent persons in the subscales of God and mysticism while the dependent group has higher score in character than the independent group. The differences between the two groups in the other three subscales and in total materialism-spiritualism orientation are not significant.

• Elderly persons belonging to the three religious groups do not differ in their adjustment status.

• Elderly persons belonging to the three religious groups do not differ in their feelings of alienation.

• Elderly persons belonging to the three religious groups have significant differences among them in their materialistic-spiritualistic orientation. In general, Christian aged persons are found to be more spiritualistic in their orientation than the Muslims.

• There exist significant differences among elderly persons belonging to the different marital status groups in their degree of adjustment. The aged persons who still enjoy the married status have better degree of adjustment in all the six areas of adjustment and in overall adjustment than the unmarried, widowed and divorced persons. The divorced persons are having the lowest degree of adjustment among the four groups of aged persons, based on marital status.
There exist significant differences among the different groups of aged persons based on marital status, in their feelings of alienation. In all the components and in total alienation, the aged persons who are unmarried show greater feelings of alienation than the other marital status groups. In all the components and in total alienation the divorced aged persons show less feelings of alienation than the other groups.

Marital status is found to have only negligible impact on the materialistic-spiritualistic orientation of the aged persons.

Educational status is having a definite positive impact on the adjustment status of the aged persons. The aged persons having degree and above educational qualifications exhibit better adjustment status than the aged persons who are illiterates and below degree in their qualifications, in all the six areas of adjustment and in overall adjustment.

Educational status is not having any significant impact on feelings of alienation among the aged persons.

Educational status is not having any significant impact on the materialistic-spiritualistic orientation of the elderly people.

There is an inverse relationship between age and adjustment status of the elderly people. As age increases, adjustment status decreases in all the six areas of old age adjustment and in overall adjustment.

There are no significant relationships between age and feelings of alienation among the aged persons.

Only very weak relationships exist between age and materialistic-spiritualistic orientation of the aged persons.
- Support from significant sources is found to have high positive correlations with old age adjustment. As degree of support increases, adjustment status also increases.
- There exist only weak associations between old age adjustment and feelings of alienation.
- Only the subscales of God and mysticism are having significant correlations with the different areas of old age adjustment.
- There are significant positive correlations between feelings of alienation and spiritualistic orientation among the aged persons.

. Tenability of the hypotheses

Here we examine the tenability of the hypotheses proposed in the study.

Hypothesis –1

“There will be significant differences between aged persons staying in old age homes and those residing in their own homes, in the six different areas of old age adjustment and in overall adjustment. Aged persons residing in their own homes have better adjustment status than those residing in old age homes.”

The obtained results clearly show that there are significant differences between the two groups of the aged persons (staying in own homes and staying in old age homes) in all the six areas of old age adjustment and in overall adjustment. The aged persons staying in their own homes are found to have better adjustment status than the other group in all the areas of adjustment.

So hypothesis –1 is accepted.
Hypothesis –2

“There will be significant differences between aged persons staying in old age homes and those staying in their own homes, in the five components of alienation and in total alienation. Aged persons staying in old age homes have greater feelings of alienation than those staying in their own homes.”

The obtained results clearly show that the differences between these two groups of aged persons in four of the five components of alienation and in total alienation are significant. The aged persons staying in old age homes are found to have greater feelings of alienation than those staying in own homes.

So, Hypothesis-2 is accepted.

Hypothesis –3

“There will be significant differences between aged persons staying in old age homes and those staying in their own homes, in the six subscales of materialism-spiritualism and in total materialism-spiritualism orientation. Aged persons staying in old age homes have greater spiritualistic orientation than those staying in own homes.”

The results show that there are significant differences between the two groups of elderly persons in five of the subscales of materialism-spiritualism. The aged persons staying in old age homes have higher scores in three subscales while the other group has higher scores in two subscales. There are no significant differences
between the two groups in one of the subscales and in total materialistic-spiritualistic orientation.

So, hypothesis – 3 is only partially accepted.

Hypothesis – 4

“There will be significant differences between aged persons residing in old age homes and those staying in their own homes in the degree of perceived support from the ten different sources and in total support. Aged persons staying in own homes have greater degree of perceived support than those staying in old age homes.”

The results clearly show that aged persons residing in their families have greater degree of perceived support from all the ten sources examined and in total support than the aged persons staying in old age homes.

So, hypothesis – 4 is accepted.

Hypothesis – 5

“There will be significant differences between the male and the female aged persons in the six different areas of adjustment and in overall adjustment. Male elderly persons have better adjustment status than the females.”
The results clearly show that there are significant differences between the male and the female aged persons in all the six areas of adjustment and in overall adjustment. In all cases, the males have better adjustment status than the females.

So, hypothesis – 5 is accepted.

Hypothesis –6

“There will be significant differences between the male and the female aged persons in the different components of alienation and in total alienation. Female elderly persons have greater feelings of alienation than the males.”

The obtained results in this regard show that there are no significant differences between the two groups of elderly persons in any of the components of alienation or in total alienation.

So, hypothesis – 6 is rejected.

Hypothesis –7

“There will be significant differences between the male and the female elderly persons in the six subscales of materialism-spiritualism and in total score. Females are more spiritually oriented than the males.”

The obtained results show that there are significant differences between the two sex groups only in two of the six subscales. In these subscales the females are more spiritually oriented than their male counterparts.
So, hypothesis – 7 is only partially accepted.

Hypothesis – 8

“There will be significant differences between the economically dependent and the independent groups of elderly persons in the different areas of old age adjustment and in overall adjustment. The economically independent persons have better adjustment status than the dependent persons.”

The obtained results clearly show that there are significant differences between the economically independent and dependent groups in all the different areas of adjustment and in overall adjustment. The aged persons who are economically independent are found to have better degree of adjustment than the dependent persons.

So, hypothesis – 8 is accepted.

Hypothesis –9

“There will be significant differences between the economically dependent and the independent groups of the elderly persons in the different components of alienation and in total alienation. The economically dependent persons have greater feelings of alienation than the independent persons.”

The results in this regard show that there are significant differences between the two groups in three of the five components of alienation and in total alienation.
The economically dependent persons are found to have greater feelings of alienation.

So, hypothesis – 9 is partially accepted.

Hypothesis – 10

“There will be significant differences between the economically dependent and the independent groups of aged persons in the different subscales of materialism-spiritualism and in total score of materialistic-spiritualistic orientation. The economically dependent persons are more materialistic in their orientation”.

The obtained results show that there are significant differences between the two groups in three of the subscales of materialism-spiritualism. But there are no significant differences between the two groups in the other three subscales as well as in total materialistic- spiritualistic orientation.

So, hypothesis – 10 is only partially accepted.

Hypothesis – 11

“There will be significant differences among aged persons belonging to the three religious groups in the six different areas of old adjustment and in overall adjustment.”
The obtained results clearly show that there are no significant differences among aged persons belonging to the three religious groups in any of the adjustment areas and in overall adjustment.

So, hypothesis – 11 is rejected.

Hypothesis – 12

“There will be significant differences among aged persons belonging to the three religious groups in the five components of alienation and in total alienation”.

The obtained results clearly show that there are no significant differences among the three religious groups in any of the components of alienation and in total alienation.

So, hypothesis – 12 is rejected

Hypothesis – 13

“There will be significant differences among aged persons belonging to the three religious groups in the different subscales of materialism-spiritualism and in total materialistic-spiritualistic orientation”.

The obtained results show that there are significant differences among the three religious groups in four of the six subscales and in total materialistic-spiritualistic orientation. In all these cases, the Christians have greater spiritualistic orientation than the Muslims.
So, hypothesis – 13 is partially accepted.

**Hypothesis – 14**

“There will be significant differences among the four groups of aged persons, based on marital status, in the six areas of old age adjustment and in overall adjustment.”

The obtained results clearly show that there are significant differences among the four groups of aged persons based on marital status, in all the different areas of adjustment and in overall adjustment. In all cases, aged persons still enjoying the married status are found to have better adjustment status than the divorced persons.

So, hypothesis – 14 is accepted.

**Hypothesis – 15**

“There will be significant differences among the four groups of aged persons, based on marital status, in the five components of alienation and in total alienation.”

The obtained results show that there are significant differences among the four groups of aged persons in the four components of alienation and in total alienation. In all cases, the unmarried persons are found to have greater feelings of alienation.

So, hypothesis – 15 is accepted.
Hypothesis – 16

“There will be significant differences among the four groups of aged persons, based on marital status, in the six subscales of materialism-spiritualism and in total materialistic-spiritualistic orientation.”

The results obtained in this regard show that there are significant differences among the four groups only in the subscale of God. In all other subscales and in total materialistic-spiritualistic orientation, the four groups do not differ among themselves.

So, hypothesis – 16 is rejected.

Hypothesis – 17

“There will be significant differences among the three groups of elderly persons, based on educational status, in the six areas of old age adjustment and in overall adjustment.”

The obtained results clearly show that there are significant differences among the three groups in all the six areas of adjustment and in overall adjustment. In all cases, the aged persons having degree and above qualifications are found to exhibit better degree of adjustment.

So, hypothesis – 17 is accepted.
Hypothesis – 18

“There will be significant differences among the three groups of elderly persons, based on educational status, in the five components of alienation and in total alienation.”

The obtained results clearly show that there are no differences among the three groups in any of the components of alienation or in total alienation.

So, hypothesis – 18 is rejected.

Hypothesis – 19

“There will be significant differences among the three groups of elderly persons, based on educational status, in the six subscales of materialism-spiritualism and in total materialistic-spiritualistic orientation.”

The results obtained in this respect clearly show that there are no differences among the three groups of aged persons in any of the subscales or in total materialistic-spiritualistic orientation.

So, hypothesis – 19 is rejected.

Hypothesis – 20

“There will be significant relationships between age and adjustment status of the elderly persons. Older the individual, less the adjustment status.”
The obtained correlations show that there are significant inverse relationships between age and the different areas of adjustment, indicating that as age increases, old age adjustment decreases.

So, hypothesis – 20 is accepted.

Hypothesis – 21

“There will be significant relationships between age and feelings of alienation of the elderly. Older the individual, greater the feelings of alienation.”

None of the correlation coefficients obtained between age and alienation are found to be significant.

So, hypothesis – 21 is rejected.

Hypothesis – 22

“There will be significant relationships between age and materialism-spiritualism orientation of the elderly. Older the individual, greater the spiritualistic orientation.”

The correlations obtained between age and materialism-spiritualism reveal low but significant correlations with only two of the subscales, while all other correlations are non-significant.

So, hypothesis – 22 is only partially accepted.
Hypothesis – 23

“There will be significant relationships between the degree of perceived support from significant sources and adjustment status of the aged persons. Greater the perceived support, better the adjustment status.”

The correlations between perceived support from significant sources and overall adjustment reveal moderate to high relationships between the variables. Support from all the ten sources show significant positive correlations with overall adjustment. Higher levels of perceived support is found to lead to better degree of adjustment among the aged persons.

So, hypothesis – 23 is accepted.

Hypothesis-24

“There will be significant relationships between the adjustment status and the feelings of alienation of the aged persons. Better the adjustment status, less are the feelings of alienation.”

The obtained correlations reveal that there exist only very few significant correlations between the variables in adjustment and alienation.

So, hypothesis – 24 is rejected.

Hypothesis-25

“There will be significant relationships between the adjustment status and the materialistic-spiritualistic orientation of the aged persons. Better the adjustment status, greater is the spiritualistic orientation.”
The obtained results show that only the subscales of God and Mysticism are having significant correlations with the different areas of adjustment.

So, hypothesis – 25 is only partially accepted.

Hypothesis-26

“There will be significant relationships between the feelings of alienation and the materialistic-spiritualistic orientation of the aged persons. Higher the feelings of alienation, greater are the spiritualistic orientation.”

The obtained results show that there are significant positive correlations between the different alienation variables and spiritualistic orientation.

So, hypothesis – 26 is accepted.

Thus, out of the 26 hypotheses proposed in the investigation 11 are accepted, 7 are only partially accepted, while 8 are rejected.

5.3 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The results obtained in this study have got a lot of implications, both for practical/intervention purposes and for research. The results, in general, highlighted the problems confronted by the aged persons in the different areas of adjustment, which of course provide empirical evidence for those who are concerned with the problems of the aged. It is high time that the governments as well as other social and religious organizations should take the initiative to ameliorate the problems of the senior citizens of our country.
• The finding that the aged persons staying in old age homes are having significantly poorer degree of adjustment than those staying with their families is a clear indication of the unhealthy conditions, both physical and psychosocial, prevailing in the old age homes. Every effort should be made to make these places provide at least the minimum facilities for the well-being of the inhabitants there – including food, clothing, medical aid and counseling, rather than being a dumping place for the old and infirm.

• The finding that support from significant others is highly associated with the adjustment status of the elderly persons warrants the attention of psychologists, gerontologists, counselors, parish, and medical personnel and more importantly, the children of aged parents. Over and above the empirical data obtained, the personal interactions that the investigator had with the aged persons during data collection clearly revealed that more than anything else, what the aged persons desire most, is the presence of somebody, especially the near ones, to hear them and to be with them to escape from the severe feelings of alienation during the helpless, dependent phase of their life.

• The finding that the aged persons who are economically dependent on others have poorer adjustment and higher feelings of alienation compared to the economically independent elderly, shows how deteriorated is the financial position of many of our aged people. Having lived and worked for the children, family and society during their capable days, now they are at the mercy of others, even for food, shelter and medicine. Most of the developed
countries have implemented social security measures for their elderly persons, which guarantee them means for a decent life during old age. It is high time that in India also, the state should plan and implement such social security schemes for the elderly.

- The findings with respect to the impact of marital status, similar to that of social support, point to the need for the presence and care of spouse and children during old age. Along with the provisions for food, clothing and medicine in the old age homes, arrangement should also be made to make available counselors, social workers or trained home nurses to cater to these needs of the elderly on a daily basis, so that the impact of bereavement and separation on the aged can be reduced. The churches, religious organizations and social organizations can do a lot in this regard. They may arrange for the gathering of the senior citizens under their parishes or surroundings on a routine basis. Utilizing extension services of psychologists, counselors, medical and other trained personnel at these gatherings, the elderly persons can share and discuss their problems and concerns and engage in recreational activities. Local self-governments, religious and social organizations, pensioners associations and neighborhood groups shall think of organizing and managing such programmes.

- Indian society and culture had a spiritualistic origin and history. Present findings as well as earlier findings have revealed that the aged persons are more religious and spiritualistic. So, visits of priests, opportunities to participate in prayers and other religious rituals or activities will certainly do a
lot to enhance the well-being of the elderly and help them prepare for a peaceful death.

- The finding that the aged women are at a more precarious position than men also warrants attention. As we know, the age for marriage set by society as well as by the law of our country is such that women marry at an early age. Moreover, there are wide gaps in the ages between husbands and wives. On an average, husbands are 3 to 5 years elder to their wives. The average life span of our women is longer than that of men. All these factors turn adversely upon the women during old age, making most of them to live the life of a widow. Deaths of the spouses make the widows isolated and withdrawn. Even otherwise, the aged women are less active socially having less outside contacts and social interactions, than the aged men. Widowhood makes them more withdrawn. The widows, thus, have to face the old age problems and worries alone, and they are totally dependent on their children. In addition to professional help to cope with the stresses of widowhood, government should seriously think of raising the amount of widow pension to a reasonable amount with which they can fulfill their day-to-day needs.

- Training programmes which help adults to learn “how to age peacefully and nobly” are popular in many western countries. Many industrial organizations and multinational companies are providing learning / counseling opportunities for their senior employees in how to face retirement and lead a peaceful retired life. These include training in financial, emotional, interpersonal, and health management during old age. In view of the reported usefulness of
such programmes, such programmes can be implemented in our state also. Trained psychologists, counselors, physicians, priests and other professionals could prepare the adults nearing old age to realize the psychosocial, physiological, and cognitive changes that they have to encounter in old age and possible ways to cope with them. They can be trained to accept the problems, illnesses and infirmities of old age as unavoidable and to enter and live old age happily and peacefully.

- Instead of leading a passive, withdrawn and isolated life, the aged persons should be encouraged to participate in social, religious and spiritual activities so that they may find their life still meaningful and may add to their well-being. Encouraging and helping aged people to maintain friendship bonds, visits of relatives, pilgrimages, and occasional get together will benefit them a lot. Training in maintaining a healthy life style also is very crucial during old age. Limited physical exercises, and recreations may make them physically and mentally more active. Research in the area of ‘Yoga’ has revealed beneficial effects of yoga for the aged.

- More than anything else, much of the problems of old age can be dealt with effectively if our traditional values in family life are upheld. We should never forget that all are bound to cross this phase of life. Today’s young adults should become a model to their children in how to treat their aged parents. The eternal principle can be extended here too, “treat your aged parents as how you want yourself to be treated by your children in your old age”.

5.4 SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The results obtained in the present investigation as well as the experiences, and observations made during the study suggest ample scope for further research on old age problems in our country. These suggestions are made in this section, along with the limitations of the present study.

- The present study explored only three or four main variables related to the life and problems of the aged persons, viz., old age adjustment, alienation, materialism-spiritualism and perceived support. Future studies, incorporating more number of variables and employing multivariate analyses may prove more fruitful. Variables like well-being, depression, death anxiety, locus of control, actual illnesses, extent of infirmity, etc., can be considered in further studies of the elderly. The counseling needs of the elderly as well as the relative effectiveness of various types of counseling approaches like religious counseling, family counseling, and individual versus group counseling, also need to be explored in future researches.

- In the present study, the extent of perceived support from relevant sources was measured using a checklist. However, the obtained results highlighted the significant impact of support on old age adjustment. So, the variable of support have to be explored more thoroughly in future studies, using a more comprehensive measure, as well as exploring the preventive, therapeutic and moderating effects of support on old age adjustment and well-being. In addition to this, the type of support – emotional support, instrumental support, informational support and appraisal support – which is more beneficial for the
elderly persons also is an important area to be explored. Similarly, the relative effects of different dimensions of support – objective tangible/ objective psychological ; subjective tangible/ subjective psychological - for the aged persons as well as the areas of adjustment which are more benefited from support are to be explored in future studies on aged population.

- The present study employed a relatively small sample size. Selecting a larger sample of the aged, giving due representation to different categories of the aged population (categories based on economic conditions, religion, urban-rural, tribal, minorities, illiterates – educated, employed-unemployed, orphaned, etc.) many help to arrive at a comprehensive picture regarding the problems and well-being of aged persons.

- It is a widely accepted fact that in our country, many of the welfare measures aimed at weaker sections of the society (widows, tribal, handicapped, old aged) does not reach the target population as intended. The welfare schemes currently in existence for the aged and their fruitfulness may be reviewed, the success of implementation of such programmes has to be evaluated, and the hindrances in the administration of the programmes have to be explored. Proposals for better welfare schemes for the aged have to be developed in the light of the above. All these require research efforts on the part of several disciplines or joint efforts.

- At present there exist only a few avenues for recreational activities for the elderly, such as day care centers, senior citizens clubs and old age homes.
The relative effectiveness of these has to be examined. Research initiatives to suggest new recreational avenues for the aged, especially for the women, which facilitate their coping efficacy and well-being, have to be made. Again, all these necessitate research efforts from the part of social scientists, physiologists, medical personnel, and policy makers.

5.5 CONCLUSION

The present investigation has clearly revealed the problems faced by the aged persons in different areas of old age adjustment and the differences existing among different subsections of the aged. It has been found that aged persons staying in old age homes had poor levels of old age adjustment than those living with their families. Again, the female, the economically dependent, the divorced and the illiterate groups of the elderly persons were found to have poorer adjustment status and higher feelings of alienation than their male, economically independent, married, and educated counterparts. High positive associations between degree of support received from significant sources and adjustment status of the elderly were highlighted in the study. Even though old age adjustment was found to have only weak relationships with feelings of alienation and spiritualism, moderate to high relationships were obtained between feelings of alienation and spiritualistic orientation among the elderly.

Admitting the limitations, the investigator hopes that this study, along with the relevant implications and suggestions may stimulate the interests of scholars, policy makers and religious, political and social leaders, so that the challenges raised by the increasing section of old age population may gain proper attention and concern.
Only through such an awareness and commitment, we can hope that policies and social security measures aimed at enhancing the well-being of the aged persons may be materialized. It is also hoped that the present study will stimulate further research in the area of old age adjustment and well-being.