

Impact of Gender, Religion and Changing Family Pattern on Death Anxiety among Indian Elderly

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Abstract

This paper aims at ascertaining the gender, religion and family pattern affecting death anxiety among Indian aging. Indian society is dynamically changing by the modernizations that are taking place in the family under rapid on-going socio-cultural changes in contemporary Indian society. For this study 240 (Male 140 Female 140) of an age 60 and above old age people from different religions were selected. Death anxiety scale was administered on participated sample. The results confirm the impact of religion, changing family pattern and the role of gender on death anxiety among Indian aging. Moreover, results revealed the low level of death anxiety among old age in Jain families compared to Hindu and Muslim families. There is significant difference in accordance to gender; female group has high level of death anxiety. It is proved that gender influenced on death anxiety. Nuclear family elderly people have higher mean score on death anxiety than joint family elderly people.

Keywords: Gender, Religion, Changing Family Pattern, Death Anxiety, Indian Elderly

Introduction

Ancient Indian culture gives an amiable arrangement of conditions for physically agreeable and genuinely sound in mature age. The more distant family is brilliant side of Indian social

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framework. Solid family relationship ties and strict qualities laud the temperance's of mature age. Individuals have, for ages, society went about as normal government disability in the mature age. In early period senior individuals in Indian culture have delighted in high status, regard, and authority, in family as well as in the public eye as a result of standards and qualities in the old sacred texts. In Indian culture, joint family framework was being rehearsed from age to age. In customary Indian culture, mature age individuals got high status, respect and nobility in the family. It was viewed as that it is obligation of child and family to give regard and deal with mature age individuals. So mature age individuals never needed to look for care from outside the family and connection gathering. Their youngsters and family individuals take care with adoration by heart. This situation of elderly is exceptionally high in the preindustrial period. Numerous researchers have revealed about rerouting high status of mature age individuals in contemporary India. Quite a long time ago mature age individuals were regarded as God however today there has been a stamped change in treatment of mature age individuals contrasted with before period.

India is going through fast change. It brought about braking joint family framework which is resource of enthusiastic family relationship. Steadily family unit framework is rising. Everything is changing because of interlocking components of westernization, industrialization, urbanization, globalization, new innovative changes, expanding proficiency among ladies and changing worth arrangement of better work and societal position. Along these lines old patterns and worth frameworks are changing and are supplanted by new ways of life and winding down customary family esteems. Because of this changing structure of society, a lot of new difficulties must be looked by elderly individuals especially. This changing situation has brought out very horrendous and ashes assen sway on mature age individuals. Social situation of and demeanor towards mature age individuals is uncertain in India. Every one of these things are stunning for Indian social framework. Mature age individuals have lost their protected life and asylum which gives regard and compelling consideration in joint family framework. They are dismissed by child and little girl in-law. Because of such reason they need to live alone by power. This circumstance shows developing fracture between the ages. We need to consider reality behind this issue. There are numerous reasons like lack of lodging place in urban and metro urban communities. at the point when both a couple are working; they feel that mature age individuals

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are trouble for them. Youthful age needs to leave life as they need, they don't care for obstruction in their issue. For the most part youngsters go to urban zones abandoning the mature age individuals in local spot. Elderly individual's uncertainty increments with movement of their youngsters from their home to metropolitan urban areas or abroad. It brings about elderly individuals feeling depression and separation. For another situation they like to live separate from their folks. In such circumstance mature age individuals face a lot of mental, monetary, and physical emergency and it influences their standard life.

Death Anxiety

Death anxiety has gotten impressive consideration by investigate researchers. It's additionally called as thanatophobia. There have been numerous examinations in most recent quite a long while. Prior analysts have characterized death anxiety as uneasiness about one's eradication and kicking the bucket procedure (Tomer.1992), Jenet Belsky (1999) characterized "Death Anxiety" as the idea, dread, and feeling about the last occasion of living that we experience under progressively typical state of life (Belsky1999). As indicated by Belsky, as individuals live their lives, they are persistently enduring differing level of anxiety about death. Erick Erikson (1950) expressed that individuals prepared through a progression of emergencies as they age, and that further down the road a phase of Ego Integrity is achieved. Logicians in present day period have consistently accepted that the human experience with death is one set apart by fear, vulnerability and dread in word anxiety. Later satisfactory meaning of death anxiety is "A bunch of death anxiety is described by dread, danger, and uneasiness, inconvenience and comparative negative enthusiastic response just as anxiety in psychoanalytic view as sort of dispersion dread that has no reasonable article." (Nemeyer. 1997) Death anxiety is a demeanor that an individual holds towards death. It is characterized as negative and anxious inclination that one has when considering death and kicking the bucket and is utilized exchangeable with dread and death (Richardson, Berman and Piwowski, 1983)

Gender

Another variable which is connected with death anxiety is gender. Some exploration demonstrates that more established ladies detailed elevated level of death anxiety than more

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seasoned men. (Suhail and Akrams 2002) study on Pakistani Muslims found that ladies experienced more prominent death anxiety than men and Abdel-Khalek (2005) found that females experienced altogether higher death anxiety levels than males.(Cicirelli, 1999; DePaola, Griffin, Young, and Neimeyer, 2003). Research in Arab populaces likewise bolsters this. (Abdel-Khalek, 2007; Suhail and Akram, 2002). In spite of the fact that those examinations were not done only with elderly people. Mumford et al (1997) completed an epidemiological investigation on anxiety and discouragement in country Punjab and Pakistan, a setting that is fundamentally the same as the Indian setting. They found that the predominance pace of anxiety and misery was higher in ladies and wedded ladies in unitary families had more significant levels of enthusiastic trouble than those in broadened or joint families.

Then again in other research demonstrates no gender contrasts in death anxiety. (Fortner and Neimeyer, 1999).Fortner and Neimeyer (1999) led a survey on 49 examinations about death anxiety and have additionally discovered that gender doesn't appear to foresee death anxiety in elderly individuals. One should note, nonetheless, this identifies with the elderly and not to youthful grown-ups. With respect to grown-ups, death anxiety is higher in more youthful females. (Wu, Tang, and Kwok's 2002) study on Chinese elderly individuals in Hong Kong found that gender doesn't influence death anxiety. Being male or female doesn't increment or diminishing one's death anxiety.

Religion

Religion is gotten from the Latin religion, According to the philologist Max Müller, the foundation of the English word "religion", the Latin Religio, was initially used to mean "adoration for God or the divine beings, cautious considering of heavenly things, devotion. There are numerous meanings of religion. The run of the mill lexicon meaning of religion alludes to a "confidence in, or the love of, a divine being "or the "administration and love of God or the extraordinary". As indicated by Wikipedia "A religion is a composed assortment of convictions, social frameworks, and world perspectives that relate humankind to a request for presence. Numerous religions have accounts, images, and hallowed narratives that expect to clarify the importance of life, the beginning of life, or the Universe. From their convictions about the universe and human instinct, individuals may infer profound quality, morals, strict laws or a

avored way of life". Edward Burnett Tylor characterized religion as "the faith in profound creatures". He contended that narrowing the definition to mean the confidence in a preeminent divinity or judgment after death or worshipful admiration, etc, would bar numerous individuals from the classification of religions, and in this way "has the issue of distinguishing religion preferably with specific advancements over with the more profound thought process which underlies them". Strict convictions, fantasies, authoritative opinions and legends are the portrayals that express the idea of these holy things, and the excellencies and forces which are credited to them.

Clinician William James characterized religion as "the sentiments, demonstrations, and encounters of individual men in their isolation, so far as they capture them to remain in connection to whatever they may think about the celestial". By the expression "divine" James signified "any item that is supernatural, regardless of whether it be a solid god or not" to which the individual feels incited to react with seriousness and gravity.

Operational Definition

Death Anxiety:

Death anxiety is defined as the thoughts, fears, and emotions about that final event of living that one experiences under more normal conditions of life as measured by Death Anxiety Scale developed by Upinder Dhar, Savita Mehata and Santosh Dhar.

Religious Groups:

In present study religious groups considers people who practice one of three religious that are practiced in India which are Hindu, Muslim, and Jain

Hindu:

A religion where the participants follow a supreme being which has many forms or incarnations and they also follow the cultural practices predominant to the religion.

Muslim:

The religion where the participants believe that there is only one God and follow the sacred text of Quran. They believe in Mohammed as the Prophet.

Jain:

This religion follows and believes in Jain shasan or Jain dharma. There are twenty four Tirthankaras, Rushabh as first and Mahavira as the last Jain practitioners believe that non-violence and self control are the means by which one can obtain liberation.

Aim:-

To study the level of death anxiety among Hindu, Muslim and Jain religion.

Objectives:-

1. To examine and compare the level of death anxiety among three religions.
2. To find out the level of death anxiety according to their family pattern.
3. To Search the gender difference in the level of Death Anxiety.

Hypotheses:-

1. There is no significant difference in the level of death anxiety across religion.
2. Elderly people living in Nuclear family would experience high death anxiety level than elderly people living in joint family.
3. There is no significant difference in the level of death anxiety according to gender.

Research Design:-

In present study comparative Research Design has been used.

Variables:-

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- **Independent Variables:** - Religion, Gender, Family Pattern.
- **Dependent Variable:** - Death Anxiety.

Sample:-

For the present study, participants have been selected according to the religion. Moreover the subjects are selected who have strongly practiced their religious principle in their personal life. Sample design is as follows.

	Gender				
		Male		Female	
		Nuclear Family	Joint Family	Nuclear Family	Joint Family
Religion	Hindu	20	20	20	20
	Muslim	20	20	20	20
	Jain	20	20	20	20

Tools:-

Death Anxiety Scale developed by Upinder Dhar, Savita Mehata and Santosh Dhar. This test consists 10 items which measure level of death anxiety. The reliability of the scale was measured by Split-half reliability coefficient, it was 0.87 besides face validity as all items of the scale are concerned with the variable under focus. The scale has high content validity. In order to determine validity from the coefficient of reliability (Garrett, 1981). The reliability index was calculated. The later has indicated high validity on account of being 0.93

Procedure:-

With previous intimation of the data collection, data has been obtained from various participants who were willing to participate in the study.

Result and Discussion**Table No 1. Showing Gender Differences on Death Anxiety**

	Sex	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	T
Death Anxiety	Female	120	6.18	2.086	238	5.91
	Male	120	4.65	1.926		

The present study aimed at to find out the impact of sex on death anxiety of elderly people. It is noticed from table 1 that gender made a significant effect on death anxiety. The mean score of elderly female is 6.18 and SD is 2.08, while the mean score of elderly male is 4.65 and SD is 1.92. The calculated 5.91 for mean difference is significant on 0.01 level of confidence. Table 1 shows that female group has high level of death anxiety than their counterparts. Sample researches have indicated such results (Mimarot, 2011, Cicirelli, 1999; DePaola, Griffin, Yong, and Neimeyer, 2003). Indian society is male dominant and family responsibility is imposed on female, hence the caring responsibility of family members automatically relies on shoulder of female. Indian females have a feeling that if they die early, before their husband, their family will become isolated and helpless. Such types of fallings have led death anxiety among female group. Why women do have high death anxiety? Indian women are more sensitive about family matters due to their caring main role within family. Schumaker, Barraclough, and Vagg (1988). In most societies, men are encouraged to pursue success and attain accomplishments which would cultivate the illusion of immortality while women are not. This illusion is useful as people rely on it to counter and conquer death anxiety. Other researchers declared that as women more readily admit troubling feelings as compared to men, their death anxiety scores are higher. Still others claim that death might have different connotations and implications for men and women and thus may be construed differently (Schumaker, Barraclough, & Vagg, 1988). This would affect their levels of death anxiety as they might fear different dimensions of death anxiety.

Table No 2. Showing Family Pattern Differences among old age people on Death Anxiety

	Family Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df	T
Death Anxiety	Joint Family	120	4.63	1.896	238	6.06
	Nuclear	120	6.20	2.101		

To investigate the effect of changing family pattern on death anxiety, is main aim of the study Indian families are rapidly changing. Day by day nuclear families are increasing. Its evident result that is psychological problems of elderly people are rising. It is evident from table no. 3. In nuclear family elderly people have higher mean score on death anxiety scale that is 6.20 than joint family elderly people, they have 4.63 mean score. The 't' value 6.06 for mean difference between joint and nuclear family and it is significant on 0.01 level of alpha. The family environment of joint and nuclear family is different. In joint family, people feel more secure. In joint family emotional bonding with each other is maintained by all family members. Also family support, emotional catharsis, sharing of problems, lack of loneliness, etc. This close relationship can increase confidence and self- esteem. It may buffer death anxiety. This positive factor is present in joint family hence; death anxiety is lower among joint family members.

Table No.3 Summary of one-way ANOVA on Death Anxiety

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	49.758	2	24.879	5.613	.004
Within Groups	1050.575	237	4.433		
Total	1100.333	239			

Table no 3 reveals one-way ANOVA results of death anxiety among different religion. The Hindu, Muslim, and Jain considered for the study. It is found that these religions differ on death anxiety ($F(2,237)=50613, p<0.04$). Anitha, B and Chaitanya Sridhar have conducted a study and have found significant difference in death anxiety among Hindu, Muslim, and Christian. India is secular country and a different religions people practice their own religions

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principal in their personal life. Each religion has different culture, values, norms, ethics, rituals, faith, beliefs etc. These factors are direct indirectly connected to death anxiety. Religion plays a different role in different way. Religion is seen as having three main functions within societies. Firstly, religion unifies people by providing shared beliefs, values, and norms (DeSpelder & Strickland, 2005). Secondly, religion helps people deal with issues of life and death by providing a framework as to what kind of life people are supposed to lead and also what happens to them after death (DeSpelder & Strickland, 2005). Thirdly, during times of crisis and upheaval, religion has been known to be a provider of emotional and psychological support to people (Richardson, Berman, & Piwowarski, 1983). Therefore we can conclude that religion plays mediating role in death anxiety. Above factors are responsible for yielding religion difference on Death Anxiety.

Table No.2.1 Schiff's Post-hoc multiple comparison on death anxiety

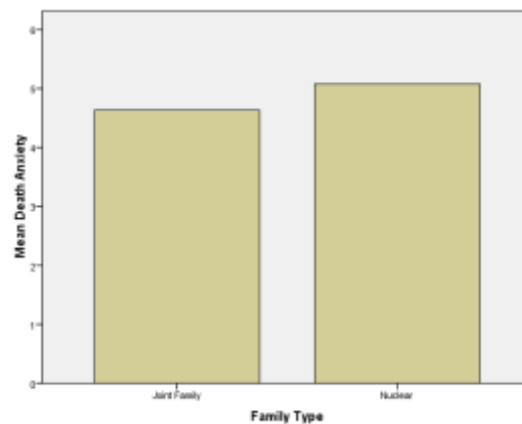
(I) Religion	(J) Religion	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Hindu 5.85	Jain	1.062*	.333	.007
	Muslim	.237	.333	.776
Jain 4.79	Hindu	-1.062*	.333	.007
	Muslim	-.825*	.333	.048
Muslim 5.61	Hindu	-.237	.333	.776
	Jain	.825*	.333	.048
*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.				

Table no. 2.1 shows the mean differences between three religions. The mean score of Death Anxiety among Hindu Elderly people is 5.85 which indicate higher than other religion. The Muslim religion elderly people also have similar level of death anxiety compared to Hindu religion. The main finding of this study is that the mean score of death anxiety among Jain elderly people is 4.79 which show a comparatively low level of death anxiety. In this study Jain elderly people have lowest mean score than other two religions. The study of Suhail and Akram

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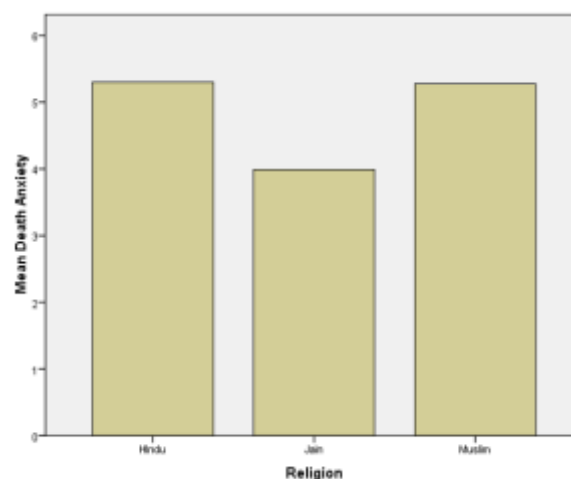
2002 discovered that religious faith is associated with death anxiety. There are many views and myths about life after death according to different religions. As the Jains perceive the rites of Sallekhana, they accept death, celebrate it and do not weep for the dead.

Figure 1 Joint family and Nuclear family old age people comparison on death anxiety



This figure also indicates that death anxiety is higher in nuclear family than in joint family old age people.

Figure 2: Religion Comparison on death anxiety



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There are three religions showing on X axis and mean of death anxiety on Y axis of figure 2. This group highlights that Hindu and Muslim old age people have approximately same death anxiety. However, old age people from Jain religion have low level of anxiety.

CONCLUSION:

- 1) Elderly women are experiencing more death anxiety than elderly man.
- 2) Elderly people living in nuclear family are experiencing higher death anxiety than elderly people living in joint family.
- 3) Hindu, Muslim, and Jain old age people are feeling a death anxiety differently. Muslim and Hindu People are more anxious about death anxiety as compared to Jain.

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