

Leisure Pursuits of Elderly Women of Punjab



Home Science

KEYWORDS : Elderly, leisure time, leisure pursuits

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ABSTRACT

Life expectancy is on the rise as the years go by due to improvement in health services, sanitation, housing, nutrition, and discoveries in vaccines and antibiotics leading to an increase in aging population. Leisure activities is very important to the older population, since such activities could keep the body functioning and promote self-recognition. Therefore, this study was planned to study the socio personal characteristics of elderly women and to explore the leisure time activities of respondents. The study was conducted in the state of Punjab and two cities from each of the three cultural regions (Malwa, Doaba and Majha) of the state were randomly selected for the purpose. Results showed that more than 95 per cent of the elderly women used to do gossip, talk with their family members, worship and watch television during their free time.

INTRODUCTION

Life expectancy is on the rise as the years go by due to improvement in health services, sanitation, housing, nutrition, and discoveries in vaccines and antibiotics leading to an increase in aging population. For the past two decades, there has been an increase in the number of elderly people whereby the majority lives in care institutions as elderly daily activities become complex to handle while at home (Hancock, Woods, Challis, & Orrell, 2006).

Leisure activities could be broadly defined as those in which individuals engage for enjoyment or well-being, which are independent of work or the activities of daily living. They have undoubted value in life-career development and individual well-being. Suto (1998) defines leisure activities as those activities not pertaining to work which produce intrinsic rewards and provide the participants with life-enhancing meaning and a sense of pleasure.

Research by Chen and Fu (2008) claims that leisure activities contribute to psychological wellbeing and provide quality of life during aging, leading to health promotion among the elderly people. Brooker and Duce (2000) state that mood and wellbeing of elderly people can be improved via leisure activities such as watching TV, playing cards, craft activities and music.

So far, the elderly focuses on promoting the wellbeing of physical and mental health. Leisure activities is very important to the older population, since such activities could keep the body functioning and promote self-recognition. Once they are into regular recreational activities, they will gain more self-esteem. The activities could calm their moods, increase their physical capability, slow down the aging process, improve the quality of life, and reduce medical expenditure. The advantages for the elderly to participate in these activities include promoting brain function, preventing memory loss, fighting off disease induced disability, and improving nerve conduction. Recreational activities that involve more or less movement, either way, both could be of great advantage to the elderly. This reaffirmed the importance of leisure activities to the elderly population.

Therefore, this study was planned with the following objectives:

- To study the socio personal characteristics of elderly women.
- To explore the leisure time activities of respondents

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present study was conducted in the state of Punjab and two cities from each of the three cultural regions (Malwa, Doaba and Majha) of the state were randomly selected for the purpose. From each city, four localities were selected on random basis

and families having elderly women (60 years and above) living with them were short listed from the voter list of the particular areas. A sample of five families from each locality was randomly selected from the prepared list, so that 20 elderly women were selected from each city. Hence the total sample consisted of 120 elderly women.

For collecting the relevant data, an interview schedule was prepared. The interview schedule was pre tested, after which necessary modifications were made and the final interview schedule was prepared.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Socio personal characteristics of respondents and their families

Socio-Personal Characteristics	Number	Percentage
Age (years)		
60-69	62	51.67
70-79	32	26.67
80 and above	26	21.66
Educational Level		
Illiterate	11	9.16
Can read and write	21	17.50
Schooling	61	50.84
More than schooling	27	22.50
Marital Status		
Married	68	56.67
Widowed	52	43.33
Living Arrangement		
Alone	11	9.16
With spouse	22	18.33
With children and spouse	46	38.34
With children only	41	34.17

It can be seen in Table 1 that maximum number of respondents (51.67 %) belonged to age category of 60-69 years and minimum respondents (21.66 %) were above 80 years of age. About 9.16 per cent respondents were illiterate; 17.50 percent could read and write without any formal education, 50.84 percent had done schooling and 22.50 percent had done more than schooling (Intermediate and Graduation). Widows constituted 43.33 percent of sample. About 9.16 percent respondents lived all alone and 18.33 percent lived as a couple. Majority of respondents (72.50 %) lived with their children (38.34 % as couples and 34.17 % as widows).

Table 2: Socio economic variables of the families

Socio-economic variables	Number	Percentage
Type of family		
Joint	87	72.50
Nuclear	33	27.50
Size of family (number of members)		
Upto 2	28	23.33
3-5	40	33.33
5 and above	52	43.34
Income of family (Rupees/month)		
Upto 10,000/-	67	55.84
10,000-20,000/-	46	38.33
20,000 and above	7	5.83

Table 2 shows that majority (72.50 %) of respondents were living in joint families. The family size in case of 43.34 per cent families was 5 or more than 5 members. Large number of (55.84%) respondents had family income upto Rs 10,000 p.m and in case of very few respondents (5.83 %) the family income was Rs 20,000 and above.

It can be observed from Table 3 that majority (98.33 %) of the respondents liked to gossip during their leisure time. Out of these, 99.15 per cent respondents did not have any set time and duration for gossiping. They used to do it only "sometimes" and were "satisfied" with it. About 95 per cent of the respondents used to do conversation, without any set time and duration, with their family "often" and were "satisfied". About 94.16 per cent of the respondents would worship in their leisure time. Out of these, 92.92 percent respondents had set time and duration of worshipping. They used to do it "always" and were "highly satisfied" with it. Brooker and Duce (2000) in a study stated that mood and wellbeing of elderly people can be improved via leisure activities such as watching TV. A large number of respondents (93.33 %) "often" used to watch television in their free time and were "satisfied" with it. Among these, 83.03 per cent respondents had set their time and duration of watching television. About 89.16 per cent of the respondents liked to sleep "often" during free time and were "satisfied" with it. Out of these, 80.37 percent of the respondents had set time and duration of sleeping. Gottell *et al* (2003) in a study stated that to have better quality of life, good interpersonal relationships and good social contact could be more useful to elderly people. About 84.16 per cent of the respondents liked to visit people (majority of them did not have any set time and duration) but only "sometimes" and were "satisfied". Again 83.33 per cent liked to attend religious functions, but they had not set any time or duration for such functions. They used to attend such functions "often" and were "satisfied" with

them. According to Bondvik & Skogstad (1998), contacts greatly reduce feelings of loneliness, depression and stress. About 82.50 per cent of the respondents liked to attend social functions, again without any set time and duration, but only "sometimes" and were "satisfied" with it. Geographical distance could be a barrier to social contact; therefore telephone contacts provide a good way of social interaction for elderly. About 81.66 per cent of the elderly women without any set time and duration used to spend their leisure time in telephonic conversation but only "sometimes" and were "satisfied". Drageset (2004) in a study stated through telephone contact with people one shares interest and support which can provide security and a sense of belonging, thereby increasing the wellbeing and quality of life. About 71.66 per cent of the respondents liked to do reading in their free time. Most of these (91.86) would do it in their set time and duration. They used to do reading "often" and were "satisfied" with it. Music is an enhancing tool which provides elderly people with ways of understanding/expressing emotions, self-identity, and spirituality, communicating feelings and improving a sense of wellbeing. About 65.83 per cent of the respondents used to listen music during their free time, they used to do it "often" and were "satisfied" with it. Out of these, 68.35 per cent respondents had no set time and duration for listening music. Also, Cattani and Tilford (2006) in a study stated that music enhance the elderly people's self-esteem and lessen their feelings of loneliness and isolation. Walking was preferred by 64.16 per cent of the respondents during their leisure time, they "often" used to do it and were "satisfied". About 70 per cent respondents would do needle work ("sometimes") and about 60 per cent respondents used to engage themselves in knitting ("sometimes") and walking ("often") during their free time and they were "satisfied" with these activities.

Playing with grand children during leisure time was preferred by only 17.50 per cent of the respondents. Out of these, majority (90.47 %) of the respondents had no set time and duration of playing with grandchildren. They used to play with their grandchildren "often" and were "highly satisfied". Only 1.66 per cent of the respondents used to teach their grandchildren ("sometimes" without any set time and duration) and do gardening ("often" for set time and duration) during their free time. They were "satisfied" with both the activities.

Most preferred leisure activity by the elderly was worshipping (mean score 9.02) followed by reading, knitting, watching television, walking and listening music (mean score 7.97, 7.87, 7.83, 7.36, 7.01 respectively). However needle work was the least preferred activity which may be due to poor eye sight.

Table 3: Utilization of leisure time by respondents

Leisure time activities	Participating respondents		Time pattern of respondents						Weighted score* for frequency of participation	Weighted score** for preferences in participation	Weighted score*** for satisfaction level
			No set time and duration		Set time and duration		Whole day				
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age			
Playing with grand children	21	17.50	19	90.47	-	-	2	9.52	3.66	6.90	2.57
Worshipping	113	94.16	8	7.08	105	92.92	-	-	4.71	9.02	2.53
Reading	86	71.66	5	5.81	79	91.86	2	2.32	4.37	7.97	2.21
Attending social functions	99	82.50	99	100	-	-	-	-	3.26	6.09	2.20
Attending religious functions	100	83.33	100	100	-	-	-	-	3.53	6.56	2.20
Knitting	71	59.16	66	92.95	5	7.04	-	-	3.45	7.87	2.20
Watching television	112	93.33	18	16.07	93	83.03	1	0.89	4.29	7.83	2.17
Visiting people	101	84.16	63	62.37	36	35.64	2	1.98	3.23	6.00	2.17
Gossiping	118	98.33	117	99.15	-	-	1	0.84	3.46	6.77	2.15
Conversation with family	114	95.00	114	100	-	-	-	-	3.51	6.49	2.13
Walks	77	64.16	11	14.28	66	85.71	-	-	4.11	7.36	2.13

Telephonic conversation	98	81.66	98	100	-	-	-	-	3.05	5.09	2.12
Listening to music	79	65.83	25	31.64	54	68.35	-	-	3.96	7.01	2.11
Needle work	87	72.50	31	35.63	55	63.21	1	1.15	2.87	4.86	2.06
Sleeping	107	89.16	26	24.30	86	80.37	5	4.67	3.64	6.31	2.04
Sitting idle	95	79.16	81	85.26	30	31.58	9	9.47	3.49	6.32	2.01
Teaching grand children	2	1.66	2	100	-	-	-	-	2.50	5.00	2.00
Gardening	2	1.66	-	-	2	100	-	-	4.00	6.50	2.00

Scoring: * Always-5, Often-4, Sometimes-3, Rarely-2, Never-1

** Ist Preference-10, IInd Preference-9, IIIrd Preference-8, IVth Preference-7, Vth Preference-6, VIth preference-5, VIIth preference- 4, VIIIth preference-3, IXth preference-2, Xth preference-1

*** Highly satisfied-3, Satisfied-2, Not satisfied-1

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