

GLOBAL JOURNAL OF HUMAN-SOCIAL SCIENCE: A
ARTS & HUMANITIES - PSYCHOLOGY
Volume 15 Issue 10 Version 1.0 Year 2015
Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal
Publisher: Global Journals Inc. (USA)
Online ISSN: 2249-460X & Print ISSN: 0975-587X

Connection between the Two Poles of Personality-Narcissism and Happiness and its Colorful Reflection in the Lives of Two Distinct Statuses of Women

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GJHSS-A Classification : FOR Code: 170199



Strictly as per the compliance and regulations of:



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I. INTRODUCTION

The human, the topper at the evolutionary ladder owing to their rationality are designers of life. The fabric layout of life endorses their attempts to achieve something of their choice. The outcome is either in affirmative, resulting in satisfaction, satiation and happiness or else in negative, in tune of frustration or depression borne out of failure. The set goal of life, both in instinctive term and social emotional term is to be 'happy'. The folds of happiness being either materialistic or else realization-based inner achievements, the average mass of the society with their limited personal resources go for the former kind of happiness. Psychologically in the realm of well-being, this is also of no less importance.

Happiness may be closely related to yet another personality component, namely narcissism. Narcissism describes the character trait of self love, based on self-image or ego. Narcissism is an emotional Investment into the self. When normal, it leads to

sustained self-regard and mature aspirations. When pathological, it is accompanied by inordinate demands upon the self, excessive dependence upon others, and deteriorated capacity for interpersonal relations. Considering the earlier knowledge the present study is an attempt to probe this kind of happiness frames in older women, keeping mind their marital status.

Positive psychology works under the assumption that happiness is a scientifically unwieldy term and that its serious study involves dissolving whole into at least three distinct better defined roots to happiness (Seligman, 2002).

- Positive emotions and pleasure.
- Engagement and
- Meaning.

Argyle (2001) presented a tripartite conceptualization of happiness:

- The average level of satisfaction over a specific time period.
- The frequency and degree of positive affect.
- The relative absence of negative affect as depression and anxiety.

Again, Veenhoven (1994) stated, "happiness can be regarded as a trait if it meets three criteria (of

- Temporal stability.
- Cross situational consistency.
- Inner causation.

Happiness involves a general average level of contentment and well-being, with a high frequency of positive feelings such as good humor, joy, laughter. Hope and enthusiasm, coupled with relative freedom from negative feelings such as sadness, worry, anxiety, anger, irritability, dependency and despair.

Happiness can be described as a presence of more positive than negative events in our lives, and, more important, the ability, when negative feelings occur, to allow them only a minimal effect on our emotions (and on our bodies as well).

Considering the above discussions, Lucas and Diener (2000), pointed out that pleasant affect tends to

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decline with age, but life satisfaction and negative affect do not change with age. *Cummins (2000)* says Australian research shows a U-shape happiness curve only applies to people who do not have good relationships. Thus, findings suggest that, social support and quality of life are responsible for poor psychological adjustment and low levels of happiness.

Narcissism refers to a “pervasive pattern of grandiosity” that is characterized by arrogant behaviours, feelings of entitlement and superiority and a lack of sympathy for or concern about others (*APA, 1994*). *Hotchkiss (2005)* summarizes the history of narcissism theory and offers thumbnail sketches of what narcissism looks like from the perspective of several major theorists. From these conceptualizations are derived six key concepts that recur in narcissism theory, which are as follows:

- Differentiation
- Internal objects
- Primitive defenses;
- Envy;
- Superego development
- Affect regulation.

The word narcissism is derived from a great myth which is about Narcissus, a handsome Greek Youth, who rejected the desperate advance of the nymph echo. As punishment, he was deemed to fall in love with his own reflection in a pool of water. Unable to consummate his love, Narcissus pined away and changed into the flower that bears his name, the Narcissus (*Sanyal, 2005*). In other words, it relates to an exaggerated self love. However the term may consist of a variety of meaning depending on the orientation.

Elke, Hans-Werner, Martina (2011) examined the relationships on narcissism and perceived inequity in attractiveness in romantic relationships. In three studies of romantic relationships (N = 253, N = 81, and N = 98) the hypothesis was tested that high narcissists, relative to low narcissists, distort the assessment of equity in attractiveness. Narcissism was measured by the Narcissistic Personality Inventory. In Study 1 the hypothesis was confirmed. In Study 2 it was shown that although narcissism correlated significantly with self-esteem, it was the unique variance in narcissism which predicted the tendency to feel under benefited in respect to attractiveness. Finally in Study 3, dyadic data were analyzed on the basis of the Actor-Partner Interdependence Model. The data of 49 couples who lived together were included. The dyadic analysis indicated that actor narcissism exerted the expected influence on perceived inequity in attractiveness, whereas partner narcissism explained no additional variance. High narcissists felt more under benefited than low narcissists. The analysis of dyadic data in Study 3 indicates that the link between narcissism and equity in

attractiveness turns out to be an intrapersonal phenomenon because only actor narcissism, not partner narcissism, is significantly correlated with perceived inequity. In addition, partial intra class correlations revealed that if one partner tended to feel under benefited, the other partner tended to feel over benefited. The results are explained on the basis of the agentic model of narcissism. All three studies consistently revealed a gender effect indicating that women felt more under benefited than men in terms of attractiveness.

In this present context, the study of narcissism is felt to be important as its concept has been extended from the restricted domain of mental illness to encompass many tendencies among ostensibly normal individuals (*Wallace and Baumeister, 2002*). The construct has been found to be closely related with performance and self regard. Different types of work styles and consequent professional demands have been found to influence their narcissistic compositions among other personality traits

Ageing may be understood in the context of different elderly samples like those of divorced and never-married to have a better view of their differential ageing profiles, with effectiveness or ineffectiveness in certain respects.

Though the position of women in Indian society is of a complex nature which differs with respect to religious, social customs, economic level of community and heritage effects, even then it is not derivable that status of women in India has undergone some changes in recent years with increasing details of freedom and equality. The comprehensive change can be perceived all over the world but it may vary from society to society and culture to culture. Yet it is a fact that a large number of women continue to remain underprivileged and are still humiliated, harassed and tortured.

Virtually all societies consider married life the most desirable type of existence- and advocate relatively stable union between husband and wife. The marital union involves such activities as living together, having children and rearing them. But surprisingly it varies from society to society. In some societies it is almost unknown for a woman not to marry, and marry, moreover, at once soon after the onset of puberty. In others a good number of women remain single for life.

It is common knowledge and experience that never married women constitute a special human category which is different from such social categories as divorced, married and widowed women. Their life style, attitudes, behaviour patterns, purpose for savings and accumulation, patterns of spending, relation with relatives, plans and attitudes after and towards retirement, sexual needs, religious beliefs, and values are likely to be different from those who are belonging to married categories. The low level of happiness of the single woman is likely to be attributable either to lack of

gratifications associated with marriage, or to the difficulties of living in a marriage oriented world. It is the primary arena of identity and self-realization; providing "back stage" areas for personal control and intimacy (Laslett, 1978). To the extent that marriage is successful in fulfilling these needs, the never-married may be less happy, precisely because they lack this "significant validating relationships".

Divorced elderlies on another pole do form a significant portion of the elderly population. The process of divorce calls forth a number of constituent changes in the personality of individuals in the long run. This necessitates their inclusion in the present sample in the current investigation to disentangle and understand their psyche from mental health perspective. The breakup of any intimate relationship is painful, especially a marriage for which both partners once held such high hopes, and especially when children are involved. Individuals in an unhappy marriage are concerned with failure, ranging from their inability to select the right mate to their inability to make the marriage work.

The present investigation aims to study psychosocial profile of divorcee and spinster elderly women with respect to key variables of happiness and narcissism. The utility of the present study seems to be manifold in character for which fruitful use of the results of the present study is expected to prove worthwhile for the betterment of human beings individually as well as social welfare.

a) *Considering these the present study purports to examine*

To locate, the difference, if there is any, between divorcee and spinster aged women with regard to happiness and narcissism.

To probe, whether there is any relationship, between divorcee and spinster aged women with regard to happiness and narcissism.

II. METHOD

a) *Sample*

A total number of hundred aged women among which fifty belonging to each group namely divorcee and spinster aged women were selected. The subjects were selected on the basis of the following criteria:

i. *Inclusion Criteria*

Sex- Female

Age- 50 - 60 years

Educational level- Graduation

Working status-Working at government offices and private sectors

Marital Status-Divorcee/ Unmarried

All of them were from middle class socio-economic status, belonging to the Hinduism religion were Bengali.

ii. *Exclusion Criteria*

Marital Status-Remarried/Widowed

Working Status- Retired

Clinical Status- Presence of psychopathological symptoms

Candidate who not yet reached menopausal state was excluded.

iii. *Tools Used*

a. *Information Blank*- Consisting of informations like name, age, sex, religion, mother tongue, marital status, education, family history, working status, personal hobby, future economic plan, and major illness.

b. *General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) by Goldberg and Hiller (1979)* is used for eliciting psychiatric morbidity among the sub-samples. GHQ-28 containing 28 items is derived from factor analysis of GHQ-60 and consists of four subscales; each subscale assesses separate factors like somatic symptom, anxiety and insomnia, social dysfunction and severe depression. It is as good as any other version of GHQ as a case detector. At the same time it gives scale sub-scores. Each item has four response alternatives. In GHQ, correlation coefficient of each item with total score is significant at 0.01 level. The split-half reliability is 0.97. Its sensitivity and specificity are 1 and 0.88 respectively.

c. *The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ) by Hills and Argyle (2002)*- An improved instrument OHQ has been derived from the Oxford Happiness Inventory (OHI). It consists of 29 items, each presented as a single statement which can be endorsed on a uniform six point Likert scale. Sequential orthogonal factor analyses of the OHQ identified a single higher order factor, which suggests that the construct of well-being it measures is uni-dimensional. OHQ is a self administering questionnaire and instructions are given in the beginning of the questionnaire. There is no time-limit to complete it. The OHQ has high scale reliabilities with values of $\alpha(168) = 0.91$ respectively. The inter-item correlation for the OHQ ranged from -0.04 to 0.65. Highly significant difference ($p < 0.01$) was obtained between high and low group of OHQ score for every item of OHQ (Hills and Argyle, 2002). This indicates that all items of OHQ are making a valid contribution to the measurement of overall happiness.

d. *Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) by Raskin and Hall (1979)*- It is a forty item measure that assesses narcissism as a normally distributed personality trait (Raskin and Hall 1979). The NPI distinguishes seven different aspects of narcissism, namely:

- Authority
- Self-Sufficiency
- Superiority
- Entitlement
- Exhibitionism
- Exploitativeness
- Vanity

The NPI is a self-administering test. There is no time-limit to complete it. The instructions to complete the questionnaire precede the items. Cronbach's α for internal consistency for NPI was 0.81. The NPI has been used widely and shows satisfactory convergent and discriminant validity (Bushman and Baumeister, 1998; Emmon, 1987; Morf and Rhodewalt, 1993; Rhodewalt et.al, 1998).

b) Procedure

The subjects were approached individually. First, the Information Schedule was handed over to each individual. After the information schedule was finished, ten minutes rest period was allowed to the respondents. After that with sufficient time-gap the rest of the questionnaires were randomly administered to all the respondents.

c) Precautions

- During the administration of each questionnaire, it was checked by the investigator whether the respondents were relaxed and willing to participate. If there was any tension on the part of any respondent, he/she was not forced to participate for that day, but a second appointment was fixed with her.
- The respondents were made to sit in a well-lit and airy room and made to feel comfortable. One respondent at a time was given the questionnaire.

- No time limit was given to the respondents while answering the questionnaires. However, it was found that most of the respondents covered the questionnaires within scheduled time.
- It was noted that each individual being tested should interpret the questions for themselves. The investigator answered questions about any particular item.
- It was assured to the respondents that the results of tests would be treated in strict confidence.
- Lastly, the respondents were asked to answer the question freely, frankly and honestly.

After the collection of data, scoring was done for each test and the scores were subjected to statistical analysis.

d) Sampling

Purposive sampling was followed for the present study.

e) Analysis

i. Scoring, Tabulations and Statistical analyses

Data for each of the questionnaires were scored following the scoring schedule for each of them accordingly. The scores were tabulated and statistical analyses were carried out that are presented in the section entitled "Results".

ii. Method of analysis

Data analyses were done by the methods described below:

Descriptive Statistics: Computation of mean and

Inferential Statistics: t- test and co-efficient of correlation were used.

III. RESULTS

Table 3.1 : Showing the mean and standard deviations of different study groups namely-divorcee and spinster with respect to the selected variables and their respective dimensions

Variables	Divorcee (n=50)		Spinster (n=50)	
	Mean	Standard deviations	Mean	Standard deviations
Happiness	62.96	3.04	30.64	1.89
Authority	2.88	.85	4.08	.57
Self-sufficiency	2.68	1.87	4.92	.80
Superiority	3.14	.88	2.18	.44
Exhibitionism	2.64	1.57	7.18	.69
Exploitativeness	2.28	1.03	2.02	.14
Vanity	2.78	.89	4.26	.63
Entitlement	.50	.54	1.04	.20
Narcissism	16.90	3.44	25.68	1.75

Table 3.1 represents the descriptive statistics with respect to the above mentioned variables and their

respective dimensions. It was revealed that divorced females have higher magnitudinal trend in happiness,

superiority, exploitativeness than spinster ones. On vanity, entitlement and overall narcissism than divorced another pole, spinster elderlies have greater mean counterparts.
magnitude in authority, self-sufficiency, exhibitionism,

Table 3.2 : Mean difference obtained from t- test showing the significance of the difference between females of different study groups corresponding to the selected variables and their respective dimensions

Variables	Groups	Combination of Groups	Mean Difference Obtained from t-Test (df=98)
Happiness	Divorcee(n=50) Spinster(n=50)	Divorcee and Spinster	32.32**
Authority	Divorcee(n=50) Spinster(n=50)	Divorcee and Spinster	1.20**
Self-Sufficiency	Divorcee(n=50) Spinster(n=50)	Divorcee and Spinster	2.24**
Superiority	Divorcee(n=50) Spinster(n=50)	Divorcee and Spinster	.96**
Exhibitionism	Divorcee(n=50) Spinster(n=50)	Divorcee and Spinster	4.54**
Exploitativeness	Divorcee(n=50) Spinster(n=50)	Divorcee and Spinster	.26
Vanity	Divorcee(n=50) Spinster(n=50)	Divorcee and Spinster	.54**
Entitlement	Divorcee(n=50) Spinster(n=50)	Divorcee and Spinster	1.48**
Narcissism	Divorcee(n=50) Spinster(n=50)	Divorcee and Spinster	8.78**

* $p < 0.05$ level of significance

** $p < 0.01$ level of significance

Table 3.2 represents inferential statistics with respect to the above mentioned variables and their respective dimensions among different study groups. Significant mean differences were found in case of happiness, authority, self-sufficiency, superiority, exhibitionism, vanity, entitlement and overall narcissism.

Table 3.3 : represent the co-efficient of correlation between happiness and narcissism for divorced aged women

Variables	Mean	S.D	Values of Product moment Co-efficient of correlation (n=50, df=48)
Happiness	62.96	3.04	.359*
Narcissism	16.90	3.44	

* $p < 0.05$ level of significance

** $p < 0.01$ level of significance

Table 3.3 represents that a positive significant correlation exists between happiness and narcissism for divorced women. It also indicates that both the variables are increasing and decreasing in the same direction.

Table 3.4 : Represent the co-efficient of correlation between happiness and narcissism for spinster aged women

Variables	Mean	S.D	Values of Product moment Co-efficient of correlation (n=50, df=48)
Happiness	30.64	1.89	.112
Narcissism	25.68	1.75	

* $p < 0.05$ level of significance

** $p < 0.01$ level of significance

Table 3.4 represents that a positive correlation exists between happiness and narcissism for spinster women. It also indicates that both the variables are increasing and decreasing in the same direction.

IV. DISCUSSION

The total set of data was analyzed in terms of the descriptive statistics of mean and standard

deviations of all the selected groups of samples. The significant differences obtained from t- test in many instances of the selected variables of the study satisfied the theoretical assumptions that "Aging as developmental phase" is expected to have more of problems than earlier stages of life (Patel, 1997; Jamuna, 1988).

In the present study, significant differences were found to exist between the selected groups (i.e. divorcee and spinster) in terms of variables like happiness and narcissism. The findings are in line with other earlier supportive studies (Patel, 1998; Kanner et.al.1981); the possible reasons or probable

contradictory factors behind the obtained differences may be offered in the following fashion:

a) Happiness

Accidental transition in the life of *divorcees* (Mean=62.96 and S.D=3.04) (Table-3.1) increases excessive work family conflict (Aryee, Luk, Leung and Lo, 1999; Frone et.al., 1992; Noor, 2003). Separation from husband actually destroys their emotional make-up. Beside this, society views them from a negative angle that lowers happiness in them. But due to their divorced status, they can able to smell the fragrance of marital satisfaction to some extent than spinster subsample and hence have greater happiness than their counterparts.

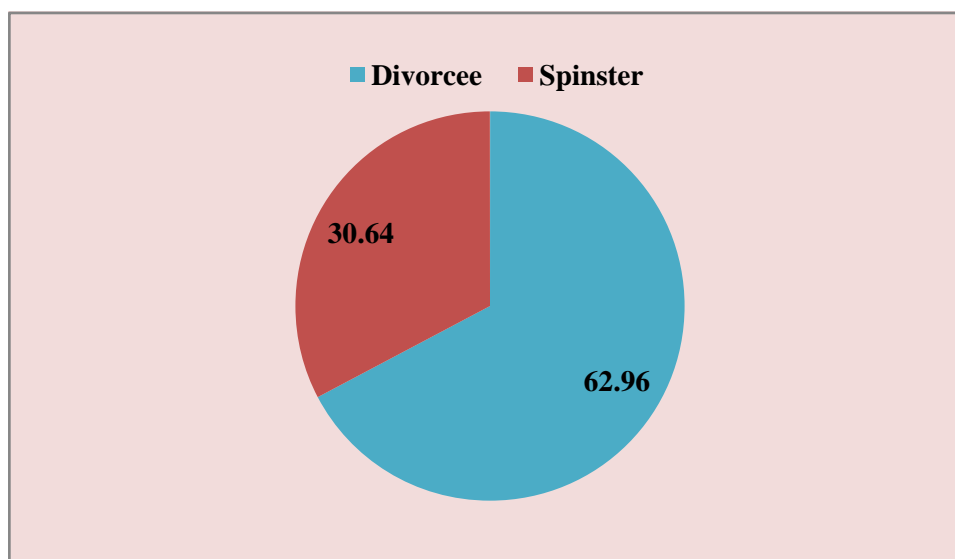


Figure 1 : Showing the position of two groups with respect to happiness

Beside them, due to negative self-image, frustration, anxiety *never-married women* are easy victim of excessive daily hassles (Diener and Emmons, 1984; Green, Salovey and Truax, 1999; Moskowitz and Cote, 1995) which ultimately leads to least happiness (Mean=30.64 and S.D=1.89) (Table-3.1) among them. Unmarried status is simply not being appreciated in our society; this regressive negative feeling basically creates excessive sense of being hassled and impairs the quality of life by decreasing motivation and impairs problem solving (Johnson et. al, 2000 and Rook, et, al.1990; Umberson, 1987, 1992).

b) Narcissism

Never-married women receives highest scores (Mean=25.68 and S.D=1.75) (Table-3.1) with respect to narcissism. Due to interpersonally inept they make good first impressions, yet are eventually regarded negatively as arrogant and self- centered (Paulhus, 1998; Robins and Beer, 2001). Due to less commitment to relationships, they have a tendency to exhibit lack of empathy, marked levels of hostility, especially in the face of failure feedback or social rejection (Twenge and Campbell, 2003; Bushman and

Baumeister, 1998). They tend to, lash out with aggression when they are rejected or insulted (Bushman and Baumeister, 1998; Twenge and Campbell, 2003). Literature also revealed that many of these behaviours can potentially be explained by the link between narcissism and impulsivity (Vazire and Funder, 2006; Kernberg 1975; Kohut 1966, 1977). They reported that this apparent grandiosity seems to be the covering or underlying feelings of insecurity or inferiority.

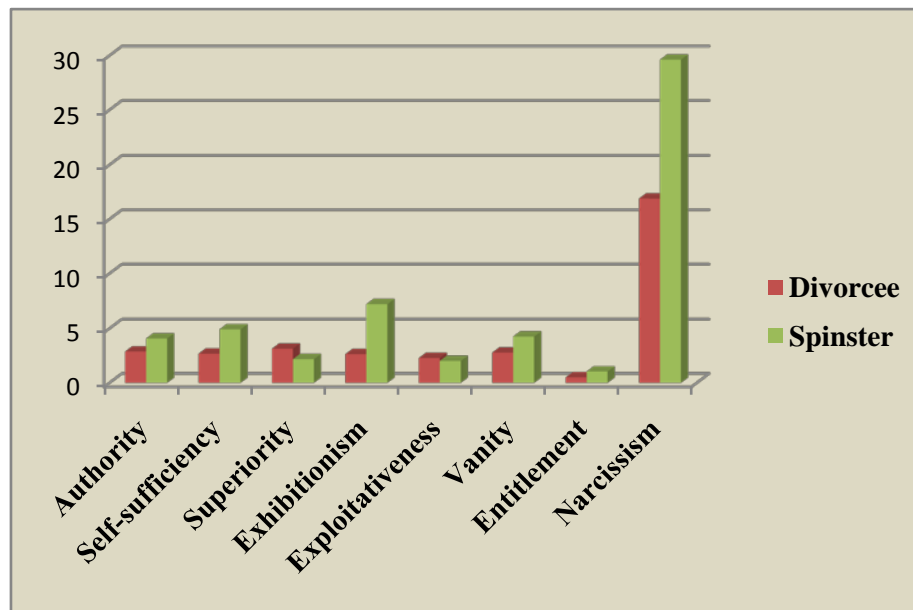


Fig. 2 : showing the position of two groups with respect to narcissism and its respective dimensions

Self-esteem of *divorced females* (Mean=16.90 and S.D=3.44) (Table-3.1) becomes fragile; as a result they feel easily hurt and threatened (Horney, 1939). Basically, they see themselves in an unrealistically positive way and want to accuse others being the cause of their failures or engage arrogant social behaviour (Paulhus, 1998) and react with hostility towards others (Bushman and Baumeister, 1998; Dimaggio, 2002; Rhodewalt and Morf, 1998).

c) *Quantitative analysis of coefficient of correlation between narcissism and happiness for divorced and spinster aged women*

Statistical analysis of co-efficient of correlation indicates that a positive significant correlation exists between happiness and narcissism for divorced elderlies (Table: 3.3). The statement depicts the fact that self-love is basically a source of getting happiness for them. Unrealistic perception of self actually pushes them to destroy their marital set-up because they feel that adjustment with the spouse is basically a way of smashing one's own satisfaction (Pimentel, Ansell, Pincus and Cain, 2006).

Similar tendency was also prevalent in case of spinster aged women also (Table: 3.4). But as the relation was not significant so it can be said that self love may be considered as a core feature for craving happiness for them. As they have nobody to share their feelings so they always finds satisfaction only through the fulfillment of their needs and may consider it as a core source of happiness in their lives (Vazire and Funder, 2006).

V. CONCLUDING COMMENTS

In sum, the research project has unveiled the following informations:

Unmarried women have higher:

Authority
Self-sufficiency
Exhibitionism
Vanity
Entitlement
Narcissism

Unmarried women have lower:

Happiness
Superiority

Divorced women have higher:

Happiness
Superiority
Exploitativeness

Divorced women have lower:

Entitlement
Narcissism

a) *Implications of the Present Stud*

- The present findings are of immense value in understanding the mental profiles of two groups of aged females.
- The findings are also helpful for individual counseling in particular and family counseling in general if and when they are in requirement.

- The findings seem to provide general awareness regarding specific socio-emotional status of two groups of aged individuals that would prompt us to take certain resolution to help them in required social direction in life, so that nature of their stay will improve qualitatively in the long run.

In our country, probably no such systematic large scale study incorporating the mosaic pattern of the selected variables in respect of the psychology of ageing has been conducted before, so the research might be a contribution, reflected through this study and can definitely be claimed to be a new and original one in this arena.

b) Limitations of the Present Study

No research is free from its limitations. This study is also not an exception to this. The important limitations are as follows.

- In the context of present investigation, it would have been ideal to conduct a longitudinal study rather than a cross-sectional one to see the changes in certain psychosocial dimensions associated with marital status. However, limitation of funds and time hindered such plans.
- Another limitation of the study is that besides the urban population, the rural population, too, could be studied in order to obtain an overall perspective of marital status on ageing in different cultures as well as in societies.
- Besides, the variables of happiness, narcissism and certain other variables could also be considered for the present investigation. Variables such as depression, loneliness, adjustment, life-satisfaction, locus of control, value system associated with aged individuals and their marital status could be interesting grounds for the investigation.
- The sample included in this study involved working individuals; if a reasonable segment of house-wives could have been included then the specific findings would have borne more socio-emotional relevance in our culture-specific situation.
- A larger sample size would have been better to warrant generalizations of the present findings as the present study essentially supports the idiographic research.
- A number of questionnaires were used in this study. However, questionnaires may invite falsification and faking behaviour on the part of the subjects.

But unfortunately, the present study, being a time-bound one, did not permit the investigator to study the effect of marriage on aged individuals in such broader perspectives. It is therefore, left to future researchers working in this area who can make the use of these variables and make some additional new observations in the process of ageing.

c) Suggestions for the Further Research

After a thorough investigation on the problems and different aspects of the psychology of ageing in context of different marital status, the researcher is of the opinion that the present study seems to have opened newer avenues in the field that remain to be explored.

- Further research studies in this area may highlight on other aspects of the personality (e.g. locus of control, resilience, emotional intelligence, relationship profile, aggression, value profile) to attain a global psychosocial picture of elderly personnels differing in their marital status.
- Comparative studies may be undertaken between elderly personnel of different professional groups (e.g. doctors, lawyers, engineers, teachers etc.) to determine differences borne out of the different professional choices in relation to the selected personality correlates.
- Longitudinal studies may be conducted using the same variables to yield an in depth picture.
- Elderlies belonging to different socio-economic status may be taken up for future investigation to yield further trend of results in this light.

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