

Spirituality and religiosity as correlates of happiness among elderly : A gender study

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Received: 06.09.2013; Accepted: 08.11.2013

■ **ABSTRACT :** Happiness is a multidimensional construct comprising of emotional and cognitive elements. It is related with positive emotions whereas intellectual, emotional and spiritual growth balance our material pursuits and make us happy. Happiness can be achieved provided one has the wisdom of discovery, the wisdom of contentment, the wisdom of gratitude, the wisdom of giving and wisdom of self-actualization. Spirituality is to some extent an one-to-one communication with the divine without the influence of any organization or a set of dogmatic views. It is based more on personal experiences rather than the experience of others. Religion may be defined as a way of life revealed in emotional expressions and inspired by faith in God or in a “supernatural power” which controls and guides the action of man and the destiny of world. Man often feels that his life is incomplete and imperfect. He longs for perfection. This longing makes him to seek the help of some “supernatural power” which can do for him things that he cannot do for himself. Hence, the objectives of the present research were framed to study the state of happiness, spirituality and religiosity among male and female elderly and to study the relationship and contribution of spirituality and religiosity towards the state of happiness. The sample comprised of 360 elderly persons (180 males and 180 females) in the age group 65years and above, only those elderly were selected for the sample who were leading a retired life, were not suffering from any deadly disease and belonged to middle socio-economic status families. The sample was equally distributed over the three cultural zones of Punjab naming Malwa, Majha and Doaba. Data were collected through questionnaire-cum-interview method. Results revealed that significantly more happiness was perceived by elderly males as compared to their female counterparts. Positive and significant relation between spirituality and state of happiness but non-significant relation between religiosity and state of happiness among elderly were found. Correlation analysis showed positive and significant relationship of happiness with spirituality but negative and non-significant relationship of happiness with religiosity among elderly.

■ **KEY WORDS :** Happiness, Religiosity, Spirituality, Old age

■ **HOW TO CITE THIS PAPER :** Princy and Kang, Tejpreet Kaur (2013). Spirituality and religiosity as correlates of happiness among elderly : A gender study. *Asian J. Home Sci.*, 8 (2): 785-791.

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