



Well being of middle aged couples : Herald for social upliftment

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ABSTRACT

Middle adulthood is a time period identified with the onset of changes and crisis. It is that stage of life span development where an individual is expected to fulfill multiple interpersonal and intrapersonal roles. With the advent of many challenges and expectations, it is imperative for the individuals to look for a mid way path so as not to sacrifice the harmony of life and well being. Good level of well being during this period of life is important as middle age is the preparatory time for old age and reflection time for early years. Therefore, the present study was conducted with an objective to assess the level of well being among middle aged couples. The total sample consisted of 100 couples belonging to the age range of 50 - 60 years. A self prepared preliminary and background information performa was used to collect the information regarding the personal and background aspect of the subjects. Well Being Scale by Singh and Gupta (2001) was administered on the subjects to assess the level of well being. The data was collected through administering the suitable tools on selected subjects by approaching at home, work place. The data obtained were analyzed in the light of objectives by calculating frequency, percentage and mean scores. Major findings of the study indicated that majority of the couples had average level of well being. It was also revealed that the couples had highest level of spiritual well being and lowest level of physical well being.

INTRODUCTION

Middle age is a time of change, characterized by competence, maturity, responsibility and stability. It is a phase of transitions when life patterns are revised in several ways to adapt to the new lifestyle. It is also considered as the time of transference of authority, freedom and decision making power to younger generations. This is the phase when people face entirely new set of challenges, opportunities and liabilities and make several compromises. There may be other aspects

of life where one has to adapt to the changes (Nema and Bansal, 2015). It is a crucial period in the life span in terms of balancing growth and decline, bridging younger and older generations linking earlier with later periods *i.e.*, old age. Couples in middle age have the responsibility of taking care of dual birth cohorts, *i.e.*, younger as well as older generations.

Erikson stated that the key job of middle adulthood is to develop generativity, or the desire to expand one's influence and commitment to family, society and future generations' Generativity is multifaceted, involving

concern and activity devoted to others and society, driven by internal desires and external expectations and opportunities. The desire to be generative can be aggravated by a need to be helpful and constructive to others or a “need to be needed”, as well as a yearning to put down a legacy behind after death (McAdams and St Aubin, 1992). Thus, middle adulthood is related with structuring and directing the next generation. The adult who fails to develop generativity experiences stagnation, or self-absorption, with its allied self-indulgence and invalidism. Generativity has a positive impact on psychological well being (An and Cooney, 2006). Older adults who feel more generative or feel more socially useful, also have a decreased risk for morbidity and mortality (Gruenewald *et al.*, 2012).

As an individual grows, better quality of life, happiness, satisfaction are more valued and treasured than the pursuit of money. Well being is a state of being with others, where human needs are met, where one can act meaningfully to pursue one’s goal, and where one enjoys a satisfactory quality of life (ESRC Research Group, 2000). Well being is more vastly sought after goal than the simple narrow-ended apparition by the individuals. Well-being can be described as a condition where a person feels positively good physically, mentally, socially and spiritually. It refers to a condition where a person experiences a state free from diseases, possesses sufficient immunity against common disease, demonstrates the capacity to work and produce results and holds sufficient potential for growth (Omeje, 2012). Well being requires synchronization and agreement between psyche and body. It implies a sense of stability and ease with the difficulties and challenges in a person’s life.

It is very significant time for the individuals to accept the impending changes of middle age and develop mechanisms to face them so that their physical, social, emotional, psychological well being and happiness is not compromised. Learning to accept the changes, adapting coping mechanisms, accepting what cannot be changed, a good social life, investments for future, health insurances, good social life, some purpose to look forward to etc. are of utmost importance for a person to have during his/her middle age years so that he/she can have a happy life with good well being.

Well being influences each and every facet of an individual’s life and is directly linked with happiness and

satisfaction. It shows how a person feels about him/herself and his/her life. Middle age is an important phase of life course as middle aged individuals in the family have a direct influence on other members in the family. Consequently, it is extremely important to gain an understanding about the well being of middle aged couples as it plays a pivotal role in determining the same of others.

The present study is an effort to understand the level of well being middle aged couples. It aims to get a better knowledge of what all methods can be employed by individuals to cope with the impending crisis in order to lead a peaceful life.

Objective :

To assess the level of well being amongst middle aged couples.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present study was undertaken with the objective to assess the level of well being amongst middle aged couples. The sample for the study comprised of 100 middle aged couples (100 males and 100 females) which were selected through purposive sampling technique. The age range selected for the study was 50-60 years middle aged couples belonging to nuclear and joint class families, having monthly per capita income ranging from Rs. 25,000 - Rs. 50,000 (Udaipur Urban Improvement Trust, Udaipur, 2015) residing within the municipal limits of Udaipur city. Self structured preliminary information survey was conducted to ascertain eligible sample for the study. Then the selected samples were studied by administering with the background information performa. Well being scale developed by Singh and Gupta (2001) was used to assess well being of middle aged couples. It consisted of five sub-scales namely- physical well being, mental well being, social well being, emotional well being and spiritual well being. To analyze the data, the collected information was scored, coded, categorized and put under statistical measured according to the requirements of objectives of the study. Frequency and percentages were computed for each area of well being to assess the level of well being.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Results revealed that majority of the couples (45%)

fell into average level of well being followed by 37 per cent falling into low level of well being. Only 18 per cent of the couples belonged to high level of well being.

Middle age is a period of changes and transition characterized by child care duties, care of parents in the family, supporting the young and old, financial decision making, gradual decline in physical health, changes in appearance, onset of menopause and many other significant factors which may lead to losing sense of identity, distorted control over oneself and declining self efficacy. The inability of the couples to meet the demands and deadlines that comes with middle adulthood may add burden to the already worse situation. The entire energy of middle aged couple is focused and spent upon other members in the family. They don't necessarily get the time they should get to prepare for the coming changes as well as for future years. Many individuals have trouble accepting the fact that they are going through some crisis situation.

Sr. No.	Level of well being	Number of couples f (%)
1.	Low (50-124)	37(37%)
2.	Average (125-175)	45 (45%)
3.	High (176-250)	18(18%)

According to Freund and Ritter (2009), 92 per cent of middle adults believe that there is a midlife crisis and 71 per cent of middle adults know someone who has experienced a midlife crisis. With acceptance, comes peace and understanding. Those who accept make efforts to change and adapt themselves according to the situation. This can be a reason as to why so many couples fell in low well being category.

Table 2 gives the mean scores and standard deviation scores of well being of middle aged couples across various dimensions. The mean scores across different dimensions were recorded as: Physical (25.355), mental (25.76), social (25.815), emotional (25.435) and spiritual (28.1). It can be clearly seen that spiritual well being has highest mean score, thus it can be said that the couples have good spiritual satisfaction which reflects the effect of socialization and life values on preparation for old age. Lowest mean score is observed in physical well being is an indication that merely knowledge and affordability regarding food intake is not sufficient for nutritional security. Hence, there is as dire need of intervention

Dimensions	S.D.	Mean score
Physical	5.30	25.355
Mental	5.14	25.76
Social	5.65	25.815
Emotional	5.86	25.435
Spiritual	6.12	28.7

during this stage of menopause and other unavoidable age related health issues. The second lowest mean score is of emotional well being is again a matter of great concern especially to the human relationship experts who are indulged with their untiring efforts to equip the family for quality life. Mean scores of mental and social well being are somewhat similar. It can be inferred that mental and social well being is more or less same in couples.

Conclusion :

On the basis of findings of the present investigation in well being it can be said that majority of the couples had average level of well being. Most of the couples reported high level of spiritual well being and lowest level of physical well being. As a result' it can be concluded that the couples are coping with the challenges posed to them by age in a relatively good manner but still a lot can be done to improve the situation.

Suggestions and Recommendations :

There is a need for intervention in the areas such as recognition and readiness for physical changes, financial investments for the future, acceptance of unavoidable circumstances, maintaining social contacts, strengthening government policies etc. It is also essential that the individual belonging to middle age should devote time for themselves where they can reflect upon their own being and work productively for it.

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