

Social Participation and Associated Life Satisfaction among Older Adults in India: Moderating Role of Marital Status and Living Arrangements

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Abstract : Background: Social participation is considered as one of the central components of successful and healthy aging. This study aimed to examine the moderating role of marital status and living arrangement in the relationship between social participation and life satisfaction and other potential factors associated with life satisfaction of Indian older adults. Method: For analyses, the nationally representative study sample of 31,464 adults aged ≥ 60 years old was extracted from the Longitudinal Ageing Study in India (LASI) wave 1, 2017-18. Descriptive statistics and bivariate analysis have been performed to determine the proportion of life satisfaction. The first set of multivariable linear regression analyses examined Diener's Satisfaction with Life Scale and its association with various predictor variables, including social participation, marital status, living arrangements, socio-demographic, economic, and health-related variables. Further, the second and third sets of regression investigated the moderating role of marital status and living arrangements respectively in the association of social participation and level of life satisfaction among Indian older adults. Results: Overall, the proportion of life satisfaction among older men was relatively higher than women counterparts in most background characteristics. Regression results stressed the importance of older adults' involvement in social participation [$\beta = 0.39, p < 0.05$], being in marital union [$\beta = 0.68, p < 0.001$] and co-residential living arrangements either only with spouse [$\beta = 1.73, p < 0.001$] or with other family members [$\beta = 2.18, p < 0.001$] for the improvement of life satisfaction. Results also showed that some factors were significant for life satisfaction: in particular, increased age, having a higher level of educational status, MPCE quintile, and caste category. Higher risk of life dissatisfaction found among Indian older adults who were exposed to vulnerabilities like consuming tobacco, poor self-rated health, having difficulty in performing ADL and IADL were of major concern. The interaction effect of social participation with marital status or with living arrangements explained that currently married older individuals, and those older adults who were either co-residing with their spouse only or with other family members irrespective of their involvement in social participation remained an important modifiable factor for life satisfaction. Conclusion: It would be crucial for policymakers and practitioners to advocate social policy programs and service delivery oriented towards meaningful social connections, especially for those Indian older adults who were staying alone or currently not in the marital union to enhance their overall life satisfaction.

Keywords : Indian, older adults, social participation, life satisfaction, marital status, living arrangement

Conference Title : ICHAA 2022 : International Conference on Healthy and Active Aging

Conference Location : Toronto, Canada

Conference Dates : June 16-17, 2022