

Religion and Mental Health in the ‘Afternoon Life’

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Introduction

A human life must be divided into two parts- forenoon and afternoon. At the forenoon part (upto 40 years of age), everybody is busy for so many programmes, i.e., education, money making, family and so forth. All the schools and institutions are for this early part of life. But there is no school/college for above forty years old which would prepare the second half of life or afternoon life and it's need as the ordinary schools/colleges introduce our young people to knowledge of the world [1].

Second half of life varies from the forenoon or morning life. Only religious school is there. One cannot live ‘the afternoon of life according to the programme of life’s morning because what in the morning would be little at evening and what in the morning was true would at evening have become a lie.’ [1].

We see at human beings are busy to prepare for comfortable life in many ways. Money making, social existence, family and personality are only natural. It is not cultural part of life. Old people are only the guardians who have wisdom and visions to be applied for progressive and advanced society [2].

But in this globalized society people reaching aged are alone and isolated. Their family as well as social network is narrowed and truncated [3]. So, their mental health is in crisis, only religious schools and religious activities are their only adherence for survival with happiness [4].

In a comparative study of elderly mental health of rural and urban India, it was found that rural poor elderly who were involved in religious schools and activities in their daily life were mentally in better condition than the elderly population of urban of socio-economically better off. About 89% of these poor elderly populations were isolated and neglected by their immediate family members and in their forenoon stage, they were occupationally daily labour. Now, they had

no financial security, and they had to live with hunger, malnutrition and physically ill health. They had no any association for their time pass. So, they adhered to the religious schools where a group of elderly met together, and they involved in religious discussion. Sometimes, it was a group performance like Corus Songs, etc. It taught how to accept death happily and further, there was a chance of rectification of soul (a substance that has an individual existence).

On the other hand, urban elderly population who was educationally, occupationally and culturally far better were mentally in adverse condition [5]. They had sufficient social and economic security in their afternoon stage of life. They were also isolated from their immediate family members, and they felt neglected in their daily lives. They had no such associations or other for their time pass. Even, they hardly devoted time for religious involvement.

Conclusion

So, it might be concluded that religious school and attachment to this school might be good for elderly mental health in global society at their afternoon stage of life.

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