

Neetu Batra

COUNTERING ALIENATION AMONG AGED: AN EXPLORATION IN LUCKNOW

Abstract

It has been argued in many studies that there is a need to reconceptualize the meaning of alienation and find out the causes of the alienation and to study, the man's estrangement from economic, a social and psychological perspective. But alienation among senior citizens have been overlooked, even though alienation gets aggravated with the advancing age. If alienation among aged impacts ageing negatively, the ways out to cope with it becomes a significant issue. In this context an appraisal of alienation and its dimensions among senior citizens of the city of Lucknow is being attempted. In this paper study has been conducted to identify alienation by using PMIS (Seeman's) tool among aged and the methods to combat the same somewhere stipulate to study aged from the lower and the upper class of the society to get the more varied picture.

Keywords: *aged, alienation, powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation, self estrangement*

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Introduction

Alienation has long been a moot point among academic fraternity to explain the man to work relationship. Philosophers, sociologists, psychologists and economists have delved deep to unveil the complicacies of alienation. In social sciences the nature, aspects, causes and consequences of alienation have provoked the academia to investigate it further and have been a challenging task. However, these issues have been the major concerns with regard to alienation among the working classes, the middle classes and common people in the modern society. But alienation among senior citizens have been overlooked, even though alienation gets aggravated with the advancing age. Studies on the aspects and issues of alienation among aged persons are urgently called for, particularly when the population of senior citizens is on increase in

NEETU BATRA, Post Doctoral Fellow, Giri Institute of Development Studies, Lucknow,
Email:nanub1999@gmail.com

all types of societies.

If alienation among aged impacts ageing negatively, the ways out to cope with it becomes a significant issue. In this context an appraisal of alienation and its dimensions among senior citizens of the city of Lucknow is being attempted.

Concept of Alienation: An Appraisal

There are so many debates about this term's usage and various perspectives associated with it. The concept of "self-estrangement" was first recognized by Seeman (1959). But the etymology of alienation is longstanding. Though the use of the term, "alienation" is attributed to Karl Marx in social sciences; its academic history can be traced back in the works of Hegel and Feuerbach. The philosophical deliberation of Hegel and anthropological (psychological) one by Feuerbach provided the background for Marx to coin the term for explaining alarming developments in industrial society.

Hegel's concept of alienation was altogether different from notional and material ideology. He represented the German realism marked with philosophical ambiguities. The stage of philosophical ambiguity between the object of cognition and the person of consciousness produces the state of alienation. It is the separation of a person from the idea carved or confronted with. The only solution to the problem in the eyes of Hegel was to equate the reality with rationality (Gregor 1966).

On the contrary, Feuerbach saw the (problem of) alienation as the sequel of dualism in between the material world and the divine world. In his perception alienation comes from the dual possessive consciousness of man in the material and the world of God as well. He divides the conscious of man into two; one in integration with the material reality and another in unison with the concept of God. The resultant ambiguity is the state of alienation. The integration of two words is the only solution to the problem (Gregor 1966).

However, long before Karl Marx had used this term while explaining workers exploitation in the capitalist system. Karl Marx dealt with the concept of alienation in altogether a different perspective. Keeping the philosophy in the concept aside, he provided the materialistic/economic explanation to alienation. Marx makes emphasis on the point that work no longer fulfils man's material needs and as a sequel man gets estranged from all that he is associated with the capacity of a doer. Alienation of man from work (that is both process and product) leads to his alienation from his true self-giving way to various forms of anomic behaviour. Alienation has both subjective and objective connotations which is very much ostensible in the works of Marx, it alienates one from work thereafter from family and relations in the process (Giddens 2016).

Oakley too dealt with alienation in a rather different way. She contended that after the industrial revolution, the culture of paid work was separated from household work, changing the structure of the home. People, especially men, started going out to different towns and cities for work and women stayed back at home. Their “*full-time occupation with domestic tasks was very isolating, alienating and lacking in intrinsic satisfaction*” (Giddens 2016). Thus, alienation takes place at both places (home & work) in a different way.

There is no denying that in the present era alienation is a pervasive thought. Alienation can be disjointed from the environment physically, socially and psychologically to some extent.

In general, alienation is discussed as a social problem and associated with “crime, delinquency, prostitution, and student unrest” (Williams 1974). ‘What causes alienation’ is a perennial question which has been dealt with differently by different thinkers and philosophers over time.

A study about alienation conducted on socio-economic variables expounds that “powerlessness” and “group isolation” were pervasive and the facets that instigate isolation are found to be “health”, “race”, “education” and “income” (Durant and Christian 1990). Though Martin (1971) in his alienation approach stated that heterogeneity was found on the predictors of education, occupation, income and religion. A revelation in Bhopal uncovered that alienation is natural among the aged in the absence of “help”, “care”, “support”, “children”, “family members”, “friends” and “neighbours” (Joseph and Bishnu 2020). Although it was argued in many studies that social psychological approach is a crucial aspect while studying alienation in the context of social change and relationships (Lystad 1972). This area of research requires an exploration in the unseen dynamism of aged and the alienation among them.

Seeman propounded five modes- PMNIS i.e., powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation and self-estrangement (Williams 1974). These characteristics can be easily related to the aged population; especially those who disengage themselves from the roles they played earlier for self-ease or due to circumstantial factors. Age is an important factor in deciding the alienation level discussed in the article, Alienation and Age- a context-specific approach (Williams 1974).

The social and psychological concept of alienation in the backdrop of Seeman’s PMNIS

It was mentioned in the recent studies that alienation in the modern era was different from its historical connotation. However, Seeman gave meaning to alienation in theoretical perspective. Seeman argued that the concept of alienation can be better understood in social structural conditions. He mentioned that it is not mandatory to study mass society. He stated that

“the emergence of rationalization in work procedures along with the decline of kinship bonds” can be assumed as the cause of alienation (Haneman 1972).

Seeman further stated that “an alienated person not only feels powerless; rather he is less able than the unalienated person to mobilize himself to manage his objective situation”. Somewhere it illustrates that it is difficult for the alienated person to mingle in society and adjust himself/herself in the environment (Haneman 1972). Roscow (1962) stated in his studies that the degree of alienation ‘differs by social class’ and very often middle class is the culprit by knowingly escaping the bonds of friendship and neighbour’.

On the contrary, the two generations, youth and the aged, have no significant role to play in the family and are dependent on the middle aged. Middle-aged are occupied with work and responsibilities. They have to take care of both the economic as well as social needs of the family. However aged are a bit free from these responsibilities if their children are settled and married and have more leisure and no definitive role to perform. Although in one of the studies, (Gold 1965), it is quoted that most alienated are the youth usually belonging to the middle class. Although aged are the second alienated group of the society and in many aspects the most alienated too (Haneman 1972). As the aged group is not vocal in their demands and needs as compared to youth so they don’t get noticed by the society much. It is revealed in the Pagani (1962) studies that, “loss of family” and “Physical illness” if combined made them isolated from the mainstream society. Depression and detachment are the after effects of isolation.

Dumont in 1967 notified by studying a community that there were considerable issues of ‘homeless’ aged and were not taken care of by ‘health and welfare agencies’. Wolk and Seiden (1965) argued for the alienation found ‘among the aged’. Many programmes were initiated to overcome the process of alienation by a combined effort of youth to bring that zeal and enthusiasm back in their life, like ball playing, group discussions and handicraft and were found useful in combating the depression and stress. It was also observed that once these programmes were stopped the aged regained the same symptoms.

Vander Kooi (1967), mentioned about the poor old who felt ‘powerless’ because of their economic condition. On the contrary Levinson (1964), stated that these poor aged had shown ‘no hope’ or aloofness, insensibility and emotionlessness to their situation. Taviss (1969) found that there was a sudden increase in the study of alienation but it was more on the self-alienation subject. Taviss (1969) stated that the study of social alienation was less fashionable and more importantly had been given to self- alienation due to change in the flaccidity of attitude.

Applying the concept of alienation for the Aged

It has been argued in many studies that there is a need to

reconceptualize the meaning of alienation and find out the causes of the alienation and to study, the man's estrangement from economic, a socio-cultural and psychological perspective.

Various interesting studies have been conducted on the aged population considering socio-economic, socio-cultural and health issues to unfold the vulnerabilities among them. The challenges of aged population linked to their health and well-being, living arrangements, social security, and system of care have been mentioned by Mishra and Rajan (2017). Findings affirm the issues of aged need serious attention and "a general neglect of the elderly welfare is also apparent in various programmes". "Culture" and "women" have been taken into account beautifully by Lamb (2000) in her studies of West Bengal. She has narrated the stories of widow aged articulating their experiences, "and understanding of their own lives" in the light of culture. Another important dimension of medical anthropology was brought up by Cohen (2002), focusing on "material changes of physiology", "political economy", "dementia", role of family, and care in Alzheimer while taking into consideration the aged respondents (aged belonged to City Varanasi, U.P, India) memory banks, letters, and memoirs.

In that context, Seeman (1959) seems to be more relevant as he provided the base of 'more orderly theoretical' approach. No literature is found having a perfect definition of the concept of alienation. There is no particular method by which one can differentiate between the alienated and unalienated person or group. This social psychological approach provides the direction to study alienation in a changing society.

No one can deny that PMNIS is synonymous to the many aged in one or another perspective. Anyone who is ageing and has crossed the threshold of sixty can relate to all four PMNIS easily. Social isolation is an extension of powerlessness and meaninglessness.

We can better understand all these concepts in the shadow of ageing. The first element of alienation can be seen in the fact that as one grows older his physical power decreases only to lose its hold over the family (the headship of the family which was an important thing in the past in Indian families, as the eldest member had a prestigious place in the family and all the major decisions were taken by the eldest member of the family), or lose the authority to make major decisions and be a part of the decisions taken by other family members and feels lost in this translucent world where all the power is transferred to the earning member of the family. Authority is more associated with the age rather power associated with income and social status.

Another term Meaninglessness comes in their lives, once they lose their significance and importance within the family and at their workplace after retirement. These two, changing structures of the families and retirement, are irreversible changes and added to one irreversible biological change makes

things difficult and challenging for the aged population. Now they have to look for new meanings to keep them lively and happy. And they try to adopt some new roles to make them involved with the family as well as society.

Third indicator of alienation is isolation. Isolation can be understood as a state of aloofness, loneliness or detachment from the world. It can be identified among the aged with the help of knowing about their living arrangement, interactions with family members, relatives, friends and peer group. Self-estrangement is extreme among all indicators. Self-estrangement is the culminating corollary of meaninglessness, powerlessness and isolation. As which factor contributes most is a debatable issue. The investigator would be taking the comparative analysis at places in the course of her study.

Last but not the least indicator is self-estrangement, it is quoted in the studies of Eric Fromm (cited from Bartlett & Shodell 1963) that, "when men value their activity for the external rewards that accrue to it rather than the intrinsic value of activity itself". However, in the case of the aged self-estrangement can be understood as looking upon oneself as an outcast from the society and loss of the feeling of self-fulfillment. In addition to that it was mentioned in the Luther and David studies that, "for the self-estranged, life is chronically flat, empty and boring, void of vitality that the individual feels should somehow be there" (Luther & David 1975). Aged too come across the feeling of self-estrangement when they feel hopeless, purposeless, and needless amidst family, friends and in their peer group.

Researcher adopted the Seeman's mode to describe alienation of the aged population. Instead of taking all five modes, the researcher has adopted only four modes i.e. powerlessness, meaninglessness, self-estrangement and isolation. The third mode adopted by Melvin Seeman (1959) of "normlessness" was not found suitable for the aged population. Cohen's study was based on delinquent boys and W.F Whyte studied the culture of Venga boys and pickpockets in his studies. On the contrary earlier studies and news from the media suggests that in general, the aged group of sixty and above are victims of deviant, delinquent and criminal behaviour in the society. To explain alienation among the aged, the researcher has redefined the four modes in the perspectives of the elderly.

Alienation, the Aged and the role of digital media

Digital media is a novel device to the rejuvenation of many old relations. Elderly are also looking forward by adopting this new mechanism to adapt in this hyper-real world of Jean Baudrillard (2015). But for them it is not an illusion, rather they are trying to find out new meaning in it. And somewhere digital media that is tabooed for the cause of isolating one generation from other generation, is helping them to get engaged and reunited with family, friends and society.

It is not that strange! As in a study, it is quoted that work done on or

with the help of computer makes people less alienated as compared to other works which are done on Assembly line or related to other machinery. This paper is an attempt to find out the harsh realities of the society in the flashlight of the relationship between alienation and ageing, and how digital media is helping aged to get back in their lives positively. Some sociologists believe that old age is not only about bad health and dependency. Some myths associated with aged are like disability, powerlessness, less control over economic issues and family matters. However, pieces of evidence compel to believe that aged want to be a part of mainstream society. Directly or indirectly they are trying to be productive and engaged in a meaningful way. They want to harness their leisure time for the benefit of society or making themselves active. As it was mentioned in the studies that, "alienation has always been thought of characteristics of masses, yet it is individual who responds to alienating aspects of society". In the backdrop of this theory, the researcher too is trying to identify alienation among aged and the methods adopted by the aged to conquering this atrocious problem.

Methodological Note

The Universe of study is Lucknow city. **The field work carried out by the researcher from February, 2017 to January 2019.** Considering the heterogeneity of the population, the researcher found purposive sampling best suited to form the required sample which consists of people aged sixty and above along all parameters such as socio-economic status, caste, religion, gender, social status and occupation. To observe diversity in their attitudes and adjustment in digitalized world ten seniors aged sixty and above have been purposively picked up for intensive study with the help of interview schedule and participatory observation.

In order to dwell deeply on the question of alienation, four parameters have been taken into account to fetch responses from the field. These are powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation and self-estrangement. To procure data from the respondents' methods to overcome the problem of alienation their daily routine has been observed meticulously. Most of the questions are related to their social living, economic position, decision making status in the family and behavioral and interactional adjustments.

Description and Analysis

Powerlessness is the first indicator to identify the alienation among the aged. It can be recognized by tracing the economic situation and authority of a person among the family and relationship. Various questions were asked to reveal the locale of respondents with reference to powerlessness. Questions include their headship, their role in taking big decisions by their children, their economic independence, their way of spending money, and their involvement in any second career to maintain their economic status.

Out of four female respondents included in the sample, interestingly one who had never been a part of permanent occupational group, was found to be an owner of Yoga Hub. She happily shared that she learnt yoga at the age of fifty only to cure herself from spondylitis and soon became a part of group that instructed other learners. And later on, she took professional training and started training others in parks as per Patanjali Yogapeeth guidelines without charging a penny. Only last year she opened a professional Yoga hub for ladies with initial strength of twenty.

On the contrary, the second female respondent, a retired government inter college teacher was contented with her pension and didn't go for extra business. She was unmarried and was living with her old parents aged eightyfive and above. She was taking care of them. However, these two respondents were economically well off; but another indicator of having the right to control family affairs is debatable. The second one chose to remain unmarried because she couldn't find her father's approval on her choice and she hadn't guts to go against his wishes.

She shared-

I have made my own separate portion upstairs...father didn't approve of all that much of woodwork and marble in the house....but I followed my own free will..and got it done.....

(Manay to uparapnaalagpoora portion banaya ..papa nahichaythay ..kiitna woodwork ho...marble lagay ...par manay sab apniichha say banaya...)

She was considered an important member and was part of every family decision often even against the wishes of others.

The first female respondent's son married a girl from different caste and she had no objections.

She shared-

When he has found the girl of his choice....why should we object...we gave our consent...besides she is good to look at...is cordial and hails from good family.....

(*Ab jab usnaysandkar he lito kya objection...haankar di hum logon nay ...dekhnaymilnaymai ...dheek dhak lagi ..gharparivarbhisahitha...*)

Despite her agreement with her son's choice, she seemed to have some grudge with intercaste alliance and often wished that better she had the same caste daughter-in-law. She had a repentance that her daughter-in-law didn't enjoy her family rituals and it would have been rather better had she been from the same caste.

Third respondent 'a male' was a retired government teacher and getting

Rs 25000/ monthly pension. Economically, he and his wife were not dependent on their children. He took care of all the daily routine expenditure such as grocery, vegetables, fruits, milk etc. He felt proud in being able to do it. But at the same time he shared that he didn't like consumer culture at all.

He shared-

Strange time it is....everyone seems to be running ...even children...everything has changed...everything is different...there seems to be no peace in their life...

(Yeh azeeb se daurhai ...log bhagay ja rahayhai ...bachhaybhi...sab kuchbadal day...sab nya...itminannahihai in logon kijindagimai....)

He was all praise for the cooperation and support of his wife and children but expressed some hidden annoyance over the fact that he was rarely consulted in decisions being taken by his children.

The fourth male respondent had retired from ordinance factory and was getting a pension of about forty thousand per month and his wife was working in BSNL office and her income was more than ninety thousand. So they were economically in sound position. He had a son who was married now and lived in Greater Noida with his wife. They regularly sent some amount for them so they didn't feel any constraint. They bought him a flat in Noida as his son's salary was not that temptive.

His son was very obedient and always took his parents advice before taking any major decision of his life. Respondent's father and mother also lived in same locality and he had been visiting them regularly in evening since his retirement. He shared that one should take care of one's parent in old age.

Another female respondent was a retired Principal from degree college and was getting pension of about fifty thousand and her husband was getting about seventy five thousand per month. She was economically stable. Of her two daughters, one was married and settled in Mumbai and the other was a script writer. She was very hardworking and happy going but her husband, a retired CEO of SBI, being handicapped depended on others for his routine activities. Though she loved her husband she felt some constraint in her outward activities and remained homebound. Her children were grown-up and she was quite at ease with them with regard to decisions on marriage, jobs and c.

She shared;

If they ask..I am happy to give advice but I don't like if they ask me for every petty things as they are mature enough to handle their daily chores...but yes ..I welcome their queries ...for sure...

Another male respondent, thakur by caste, belonged to Unnao. He had two daughters and both were of marriageable age. Elder one was working in a good multinational company and earning well. He was an account officer

in Lucknow Development Authority. His wife was a homemaker. He had ancestral property in Unnao which fetched enough in terms of ration for his family. He loved a simple life and hardly had any inclination for dining out and theatrical pleasure etc. He went out only to accompany his daughters whenever they came from Bangalore. He told the researcher that the last movie he watched was in 2015 only. As his wife talked daily with their daughters, he talked to them twice or thrice a week. He was worried about his elder daughter's marriage.

He shared-

Now this year she will be thirty, now she should be married, but I respect my children's decision too, she doesn't know how to cook ..in 2013... there was a proposal ...they were very interested...but my daughter declined... they asked whether she would like to learn cooking or not ..my daughter said "I can learn cooking only in weekends" ...and afterwards she said, "Papa I am not interested anymore" ..so I ignored that proposal...but now I feel it is time.....

His younger daughter was not doing so well as the elder one. He had to send some amount regularly to her as pocket money and had no regrets. He said -

I am okay with all this. Once elder daughter's marriage is finalized, I will renovate my house.

He admitted that dowry was very common in thakurs. People asked about the prospective money even before having a glimpse on girl's photograph. He said that about twenty to twenty five lakh was a normal amount needed for a marriage. Nowadays people also wish some more like car of their choice in addition to cash.

Another male respondent had retired last year as a gardener from central government research institute. He had two sons and one daughter; all were married and had children. He had just purchased a land for his daughter for about five lacs to fulfill his daughter's desire after retirement. Both his sons were earning about fifteen thousand in MNCs. He had a joint family and both the sons gave some part of their income to their mother.

He shared that he also gave some tuitions at some Kothis (bungalows) and apartments thrice a week and earned about fifteen thousand per month. He didn't go to pick his regular pension from the bank and thought that it was time that his sons also bore some responsibility like paying their children's school fee etc. He said that his pension was only a saving now and it would be helpful for them in rainy days. He had good rapport with his clients and relatives. He considered himself financially self sufficient and never sought help from others; rather he helped his relatives and others in times of need.

His sons were obedient; he thought that daughters had no right in ancestral property but yes, he would give his daughter her due amount of share by buying some land for her and by giving some cash too. He said if daughter was financially not well then it was father's duty to provide financial assistance.

Next respondent, a Muslim aged seventy was a professor of Geography in Aligarh Muslim University. Right now she had acute vision problem and had broken her hip bone for a slip in the bath room rendering her unable to walk properly. Even while talking to the interviewer she used the term "physically disabled" for herself. Her husband was an account officer in the same university. They didn't have any children. Both lived in Aligarh and used to get a total of about one lakh rupee per month as pension. They felt it was enough for them.

Another respondent aged seventy was an advocate and social activist. He had been influenced by socialist movement and had turned a revolutionary since his young days. His home town was near Gonda known as *Ghurah*. He got married in 1961 when he was in class X. Later on, he moved to Lucknow and in 1975 he divorced his first wife and married again in 1976. He had three sons and a daughter from his first wife and no children with the second one. His second wife was government teacher and was getting a pension of about twenty four thousand, and he too was getting a pension of about fifteen thousand in the name of *LoktantraSwantrataSenani*. He went to jail many times due to his outrageous speech and other anti-government activities.

He had about three point five acres of property in his village; his eldest son and middle son lived in village and did farming. His middle son was not married as he was not mentally stable. His elder brother's family, too, lived in the village and base of their livelihood was that land only.

He shyly admitted that rice, wheat, daal(pulses) and mustard oil used to come from his village only. His home, a simple one with all basic amenities, was flat in a complex and on the ground floor he had two shops, one of which he had rented out and he had made the other one his office chamber.

Now a days he didn't earn much. He had to spend his own money sometimes for the poor clients.

Last respondent a Brahmin by caste and aged seventy eight hailed from Sant Kabir, a village in Basti (Gorakhpur). He had done Bachelor of Engineering from IIT Roorkee. He got selected in UPSC exams and was appointed as Assistant Engineer in Gonda in 1962. He retired from the post of Additional General Manager. Due to his job he had lived at many places and went abroad as well. His wife was a Post-graduate from Lucknow University and had met an accidental death in 2004. His mother stayed with him till her end. He retired in 1999. The monthly income, he was getting before retirement,

was about twenty five thousand and now he was getting about one lakh monthly as pension. He was an active member of Theosophical Society.

Case studies revealed that most of the respondents, either from upper, middle or lower class, were managing their economic needs well except one who lived in Sevarath Ashram (old age home). He used to work as a Munshi (accountant) in a grocery shop in a village Unnao. He was unable to save money for his twilight years. He had a daughter who got married and was also not economically well. So she, too, could not be able to take care of her parents. Also old superstitious values, beliefs and customs prevailing in the village prevented her from keeping her parents with her as living with girl child was considered a taboo (paap). Because of that he shifted to a shelter home with his wife. He shared-

*Shaadi key baadladki key gharkhana aur kha key naraqmey Jaanahaikya
(I don't want to go to hell by staying and eating food at my daughter's
place)*

Another indicator of authority is found positively co-related, with respondents' economic condition, education status and gender. Interestingly a gardener living in a joint family, a retired central government employee, was at the best level of adjustment as per self assessment. His sons, though educated, showed their respect and never took any major decision without his consent. Most of the time, the respondent himself was the main decision maker. However, middle and upper class respondents were found to be more liberal with children and didn't expect much from them. Their needs were simply emotional and expressed a feeling that their children should give them respect and ask or consult them before taking major decisions. They preferred quality time over staying along with them. In case of females a noteworthy observation was that unmarried girl of advanced age had a respectful place in families. The society allows her to voice opinion in family matters, but acceptance of the same is not assured.

Meaninglessness

Meaninglessness may be taken as a situation when a person loses grip over important affairs in the family and workplace as well. With the changing value structure, it seems a little bit burden on young generation to give their elderly a place of prominence in day to day business. Achievement qualities have usurped the ascribed one in the pressure of global dynamism. Respondents have been asked to detail their routine activities to identify spots of meaninglessness or vice versa in their life.

The first female respondent involved herself as a Yoga trainer. She had this new role to perform and this gave her a new identity and meaning to her life in later years. People were inspired to see her doing all yoga exercises without inhibition at that age. She woke up at 4'0 clock and her classes started from quarter past five in the morning. She used to take two batches daily and

had on customers' demand appointed one jumba trainer too. She shared that she loved all her busy routine and she used to relax on Sunday and felt good about life. Despite having arthritis and the problem of spondylitis, she managed work and life balance. She felt that this yoga exercise helped her overcoming health issues and she felt more active and youthful.

The second female respondent was enjoying her retirement and she shared that in future she would like to serve the society. At present she was taking care of her old parents with full zeal and enthusiasm as both were above ninety. She used to spend her leisure time in maintaining her plants in pots. As she was a home science teacher she loved to brush up her culinary skills by trying new recipes and loved to cook for relatives and friends. Sometimes she felt lonely but she tried to keep herself busy. Her life revolved around her parents, brother's family and her elder brother's children. As her elder brother was no more so she was much attached to his only daughter. She was too generous in spending on those children and tried to fulfill their demands without any question.

The third male respondent didn't consider himself in bad health despite having diabetic and hypertension. He liked to have paan (beetle leaf) in the evening and had lemon tea instead of milk tea for good health. He liked home-made food and his wife always made extra effort to prepare delicacies for him. He was very social having a large peer group and interacted with them regularly. He used to go for evening walk regularly. He shared that he needed a sleep of two hours in the afternoon daily. He got very irritated if his afternoon sleep was disturbed. He enjoyed gardening and used to write poems. Another favourite activity of his was political talks. He considered himself a socialist and believed in humanity rather than religion.

Fourth respondent a male, had, in 1983, fractured his leg in an accident and was bedridden for six weeks. When asked about his illness or any ailment/disease he immediately denied and said he took tablet for hypertension and oral pills for diabetic mellitus. He used to go for a walk in evening. He occasionally took alcohol like in a festival or in the parties. His hobbies included reading newspaper, watching TV especially sports and reading books. He said now he was more interested in reading mythological stories. He involved himself in share market and updated himself about all news pertaining to share market. However he didn't do online share bidding but yes he took keen interest in long term investments.

Another female respondent a retired principal of Degree College had four books in her kitty. She loved to be known as a Historian. She had spiritual inclination too. She enjoyed theatre, classical music evenings. She dressed well, always wore fashion jewelry with her outfits. She was pure vegetarian and her family too stayed away from meat. She used to enjoy good food and was always ready to welcome her guest at lunch. She admitted that most of

the time she sought for a company to go out. Sometimes she went alone but loved if someone was ready to accompany her.

She had thyroid and cholesterol and took regular medicine. She was very regular in going for walk and yoga. She shared that her yoga instructor advised her to do yoga on bed and had made arrangement to do all the exercises on bed instead of floor because she had some knee problem. Despite this she loved chocolates and always made sure that she took proper diet which her body needed at this age. She was fond of Chinese cuisine and even invited the researcher for lunch in renowned club of Lucknow for the same. She read Bhagvad Geeta, and used to meditate for an hour at least five days in a week. She was follower of some Swami Ji and used to visit him once in a year.

Another male respondent thakur by varna, once in early eighties had a shoulder dislocation, but now he was in good health. He had been regularly exercising for thirty to forty five minutes and used to go for a walk but due to cold weather sometime he skipped his walk routine. He had no addiction, no smoking, didn't consume alcohol, pan or panmasala and was pure vegetarian. Sometimes his elder daughter used to take egg as she lived in Bangalore. He never forgot to have a glass of milk before going to bed at night. And he was fond of Arhardaal that he took at least five times a week.

He was very much attached to his sisters who lived in the same city. He used to visit them regularly. His sister's children used to stay with him in their younger days because his sisters were working. Now, the children having grown up have moved to separate places. Their's was a joint family but now his parents were no more so it was only he and his wife. Conflicts were rare at home as they all were well acquainted with each other's habit and rarely interfered in each other's lives. He had only one good friend since his office days. He was not an outgoing person. He rarely attended colony meetings and functions; most of the time his wife alone went to wedding and functions. Nowadays he had started going to *Satsang* with his wife and wanted to expand that group. Sometimes they used to invite those Satsang people at their residence and called neighbours to join them.

Next respondent, a retired gardener from central government research institute still indulged himself in labour intensive work and felt no need for morning walk or regular exercises. He used cycle to commute. He had deposited about seventy eight thousand rupees to get life time medical benefits from his office. Total nine members were residing together including his wife, sons, daughters in law and grand children. He said conflicts were not regular as his sons were obedient. He conversed most of the time with his wife and elder son. He believed in humanity although he was not in favour of intercaste marriage.

Female respondent, a retired geography lecturer, was fond of travelling and photography but due to her physical condition now she was not able to do.

She shared that she and her husband travelled a lot and her driver who had been with her for twenty seven years was trained well to drive on hilly roads. She had explored almost every hill station of India including Leh, Laddakh, China border, Tibbet border, Kanyakumari, Puri and c. She had a beautiful collection of photographs clicked by her, especially beautiful scenes from the mountains, that she had got framed and had decorated in her living room. She was also fond of listening old classic songs that her husband had saved in her mobile and she used to play them whenever she wanted to listen. She shared that earlier in seventies she had a beautiful collection of cassette of her hostel days. She had a beautiful collection of ornamental as well as annual plants collection, earlier she used to tend to the plants herself but now she had gardener who took care of her plants.

Another respondent, a male and social activist was suffering from thyroid and hyper tension along with his wife. In that course he was admitted once for a week in Lari(hospital). Most of the doctors he named were Muslim except one or two to whom he consulted regularly. He had no addiction of any kind. He was not involved in any physical exercise as his doctors advised him not to do so. He used to walk in his house after having dinner. He still was visiting to high court and advocating cases. He fought most of the cases for free. He hesitantly admitted that in earlier days too he fought cases for poor people and then he used to charge exuberant amount from affluent to compensate for the poor ones.

Next respondent, a retired Additional General Manager, passed out from IIT Rorkee, regularly walked for an hour and had been meditating regularly. He was active member of Theosophical Society and visited India and abroad to deliver lectures. He also organized meetings at home. There were about thirty to thirty five members in Lucknow; most of them were elderly. They organized meetings and discussed things. They organized conferences mostly in Chennai and Kolkata and people from all over the world and from all sections attended the same.

On the contrary an aged couple from old age home had no role to perform. Both woke up early and got busy in daily routine chores. Afterwards they sat in verandah with other inmates of old age home. He shared-

“We are just living as God want us to be. We don’t have any life and role to perform...just living...”

Case studies revealed that most of the respondents involved themselves in new roles after reaching at certain age (retirement/ sixty above). Female respondents, who were earlier working now wanted to enjoy life after retirement and are pursuing their hobbies of yoga, travelling, writing etc. Male respondents too were taking care of household responsibilities with extra care and passing their leisure time by opting any of the physical activities, maintaining relationships and friendship with frequent calls and visits. Evening

with friends and neighbours was a favourite time pass. However in case of gardener because of his skills he was always in demand and he went for tuition in Kothis as per his convenience. This gave him a feeling of self-fulfillment. Other male respondents involved themselves in some hobbies like share market, gardening, writing poems, satsang and being an active member of theosophical society as per their interest.

An old age couple from lower strata was an exception who was leading a life devoid of charm. Their penury had left them with no option but to spin the days of life.

Isolation

Isolation is not only feeling of loneliness rather it can be better understood as withdrawal of a person from his/her duties, relationships, friends and peer group. It can be either circumstantial or forced or one's own choice. But in most of the cases it was found to be circumstantial and aged were trying to adopt different strategies and methods to overcome this problem. It is general assumption that adjustment in old age is easy for female aged as compared to male aged, because fewer females are a part of work force. And so adjustment after retirement for females is easy as they involve themselves in various house hold chores and home management. On the contrary, study also revealed that females had more ideas to spend their leisure time. In spite of the fact that all my female respondents were not living with their children, they managed to make themselves busy in one or the other engagements.

As mentioned earlier one female respondent was yoga instructor at the age of sixty two, another female respondent despite her physical disability (mentioned by respondent herself) listened gazals every evening and her husband read newspaper for her every morning and loved to explore new travelling spots and shared happily that she had poor eyesight but the feel of weather in hill stations made her lively that was the very reason they used to plan visit at least twice in a year. She had a loyal driver who took care of this travel tours. Next female respondent was fond of cooking and indulged herself in the same. On the contrary male respondents were trying to involve themselves in homely duties like bringing vegetables, grocery and were trying to share responsibilities of their partner in day to day activities. All the respondents now felt good as they could visit their relatives, friends and loved to plan outings with family, friends or relatives.

Retired male gardener shared that he was fond of outstation visits but due to his wife's ill health, he didn't travel much. Rather he planned excursions alone or went with friends to religious places like Haridwar, Kanyakumari, Puri etc.

Another male respondent aged seventy eight who lived with his wife, son, daughter-in-law and grand son shared that his son usually planed a trip

for his parents once a year by asking about their favourite places of their choice. He shared he had many friends and relatives in the same city so he used to visit them often.

He shared-

AanaJaana to hamarayyahanlaga he rahtahai...rishtaydaar dost yaar sab yahinhai ...hamaara social circle bhothai ...(people visit us often... our relatives ,friends all are from this very place...we have got a wide enough social circle to interact with....)

Next respondent who was retired central government employee was not very social but he visited his parents daily who lived nearby. And he had few friends in another city as he had worked there. So meeting his colleagues was not quite often possible due to the geographical distance. His tight schedule during his working tenure was a reason of his being less social. He used to go at five in the morning and came back at eight in the evening and hence hadn't energy and time to go anywhere. He shared that his wife, despite her job, used to take care of everything from grocery to medical. He accepted fairly that because of his wife he could maintain all his social relationships.

Thakur male respondent shared that he had only one close friend. He rarely attended colony meetings and functions like holi Milan etc. His wife took care of all these social responsibilities. His wife alone attended marriage or function in the family. He didn't like to go with her. On the contrary, he was much attached to his sister's family and regularly visited them. He and his wife both used to take care of sisters children when they were young as his wife didn't work outside. Children lived with them until they moved for their jobs.

He shared

Humay yeh colony vagarhmaijaananahiachhalagta ...hum to bas rishtaydaarihaiusi may khushrahtayhai...ek dost bhaimohallay may sathkaamkartaythay hum dono ...bas kaafihai...yeh picture vagarhbhibhot rare he dekhtayhain ... ekbaarladki nay ticket book karva di thi ..to dekhaaythay...bhotjidikari...(we do not like visiting people in the colony....Iam happy amidst my relatives... I have a friend from this colony who works with me. and that is enough...I sedom go to watch movies...once at the insistence of my daughter,who had booked the movie tickets, did I go to a movie....)

Interestingly he also shared that he liked watching the programme named Rangoli on Doordarshan and his nephew teased him over phone when they called, "mama ji (maternal uncle) you still watch rangoli on television" and he laughed.

Another male respondent who was social activist shared that his work involved much interaction with people. They didn't have any issue from his

second wife. His son from first wife sometimes visited him. But most of the time his grandson took care of him. He had a large social circle but only few of them are close to him. He was simple man and much interested in doing something for society.

A Brahmin, aged seventy seven and retired, shared that he had many friends and relatives. After his wife's death he became active member of theosophical society and fondly participated in organizing meetings. Some meetings were getting arranged at his place itself. And he also attended the theosophical conferences. Most of the conferences were held in south India. He wrote many blogs on this topic and was looking forward to writing a book on the same.

Feeling of loneliness is very abstract. No person can opt out from the notion of not ever having come across through this strange feeling. But in the case of aged, it is associated with their living arrangement and day today interactions with family, friends and relatives. Study revealed that out of ten respondents about five were living with their spouses, among them one was childless couple and others' children were settled in different cities due to their job profile. No one had shown interest in settling down with children, despite missing the smiles and activities of their grandchildren. But leaving the place where they had lived for thirty or more years was not easy. Their general assumption was that they would not be able to adjust with their children's fast pacing lives and felt uncomfortable without their peer group. Respondents who were living in joint families were found to be emotionally secure. The case of old age couple from the Sevarath ashram is altogether different. Having no son to earn and care for coupled with the state of destitute; they felt isolated from the worldly affairs. Their life was confined to the walls of Ashram playing a roleless role. Wife shared- "we got a place to live ...might be because of our few good deeds".

Self Estrangement

This is the rarest of rare phenomenon, which evades any plausible definition. Defining it is little difficult, as it can be an extension of all the above three elements or it can be due to one or combination of all. Presence of powerlessness, meaninglessness, and isolation altogether can be positively correlated with self-estrangement.

But none of my respondents were found in the state of self-estrangement as they all were trying to cope up with the PMIS by adopting different methods and solutions to overcome this situation.

Interestingly, this new-fashioned digital media mechanism was found to be relevant in diluting the process of self-estrangement among aged. Most of the respondents, both male and female, were keenly absorbed in social media sites and were using it actively to comeback in the mainstream society.

They all wanted to update themselves so that they were not left alone on the other side of bank, so to speak. However, their stories about adopting this technology were quite different from one another.

Thakur male respondent, who had two unmarried daughters had smart phone. He was not much tech savvy. He first used internet in 2012 during his younger daughter's admission in a Hotel Management course. At present, he used it sometimes to buy stuffs from online sites but he stated that he always went for cash on delivery payment mode for safety purpose. He found whatsapp better than facebook, as he complained that facebook sometime contained stuff which was not suitable to be viewed with family members. He said that though he had blocked those things several times, they still crop up. So he rarely surfs facebook now, he was rather inclined towards whatsapp. Whatsapp was better medium as one could chat with anyone one wanted and it was personal too, with all care to privacy.

He started using smart phone in 2013. His elder daughter had gifted same model smart phone to both of her parents. He admitted that his wife was smarter than him in using smart phone.

He watched television, specially Rangoli that was aired at half past seven every Sunday. His nephew made fun of this habit but he was a regular watcher and told enthusiastically that he also used to give answer to the questions asked on the same programme.

On the contrary, a female respondent, who was a yoga, trainer had found both social applications quite relevant. She was using it liberally to flourish her yoga business. She had been posting videos and pictures on her facebook page and she had made a whatsapp group of her customers and posted every news and events related to the Yoga club. Members of Yoga hub also responded well to the group. Although she knew not much about the use of smart phone but loved to ask, used all the applications from stopwatch to calculator in the phone. She watched different exercises from the YouTube and practiced them and then added them in her course.

Female geographer, despite her disability, fondly used sound systems, MP3, and listened to FM broadcast daily. She was not able to watch television, but by listening she entertained herself. She had her mobile and used it to call and listen to various music shows and serials on You tube.

Retired government inter college teacher from Balrampur also had one costly smart phone and she seemed to be keen learner. She shared that whenever her nephew came to her she satisfied her queries from him regarding the use of device. She was on the facebook, and whatsapp. She shared that these two applications were very good. Because of facebook she was able to reconnect with her college friends, relatives, and colleagues. She shared that she found both media worthy and felt good to share something with all. She

further stated that one could share things with others and also wished them on their birthdays and anniversaries without bothering them.

Government teacher from inter college when inquired about using smart phone, shared that once he refused his son's offer of a smart phone as a gift, he frankly admitted that he was not that tech-savvy.

He shared,

yeh to meraykuchsaahityakarMitron nay mujhaybaarbaar kaha to mai is tarafaakrishithua some of mine friends motivated me to use smart phone. (some of myfriends motivated me to use smart phone.)

He didn't himself use any e-services on his phone as he told that his son had done all this; he used email rarely only to send something to relatives. Though, he was quite active on facebook, and shared his views on politics, wrote poems, and other posts that he felt worthy to sharing. And he had never forgotten to wish birthdays and anniversary to close ones and always made sure to post a picture with beautifully written lines on his wife, daughter-in-law, grand-son, son, daughter and grand-daughter (Naati). He didn't like whatsapp application as he said it was very private medium.

He shared

WhatsApp pay dekhiyay log gaalidetayhainekdoosray ko buraikartayhain... Nehru ki ..kuchbhikahtay sab private hai...facebook pay jo haisabkaysaamnay ...public domain hai ...may to WhatsAppjaldikholta he nahi...

(According to him WhatsApp is private medium of chatting people use to abuse each other and do things which are hidden from public platform ..so ..I use rarely this medium...people talk ill of each other ..everything is open on Facebook. t is a public domain...so I rarely use this medium)

Interestingly while talking to his son who was medical officer, it was revealed that the respondent was addicted to using facebook. Whenever any member from the family checked him from using much he always made excuses.

My next respondent, a retired Principal, came into contact with cyber gadgets like mobile and desktop in 2001 only when she visited Hongkong with her husband for research and job opportunity. She was forced to learn everything from typing to making PPT in six months of her stay there in the absence of traditional alternatives of teaching and learning.

She shared that her daughter made fun in those days-

Mumma how awkward it looks when you are moving around in streets with that big mobile phone in hand.....

She said digital world is not bad at all; it depends on how one uses it

and controls one self. For this generation, things are very easy; we had to struggle hard in every field from commuting to daily chores. However this internet is not good in the sense that one relies less on books. People are not reading books, texts, they rather prefer text available on internet whether it has right information or wrong and beyond that no one bothers. So the writing capacity of people is less nowadays. On social media many people are with fake identities and it creates identity crisis. She said many times people just do things on social media to make others happy as they like others post even without reading it and share things without having proper knowledge about the issue. There is a huge difference between having information of anything and having knowledge of something.

On the contrary, one respondent, the gardener, bought his first mobile phone about ten years back and has never used computer and internet. He used his mobile for communication purpose and for listening music while working. Sometimes he watched Bhojpuri songs video on his son's mobile. He was fond of Bhojpuri songs and movies.

In addition to that, the social activist was not fond of social media applications. However he accepted the importance of digital media. He felt this made one's life easy. He had laptop but he used to write reports and things. He vibrantly used e-mails. And in case of any trouble, he asked youngsters to help him out. He shared that-

WhatsApp is too time consuming and because of his numerous social contacts he is not able to reply everyone .. so I deleted ..surf Facebook sometimes...but am not overly fond of it...

we people work and don't have much timeif I spend time on facebookthen who will work on cases....

He shared that he used to write poems depicting realities of poor people but he never made any record, although he recited few lines from his poem that he still remembered.

Retired Roorkee engineer, when asked about importance of social media applications shared that these applications were time consuming and youngsters were addicted to this world and didn't have time to talk with others. It was as if robots were made to welcome the guests, but one could understand that they didn't have emotions. How could a machine be that affectionate like human? So machines have limitations and they are bad for health too.

He shared-

I use less mobile as compared to land line...I prefer talking over land line phone ...it is less harmful...my daughter too talks over land line ..and in America too people have started using less mobile phones... mobile phones are just lying They prefer talking over land line...now

they understand ...

He was quite progressive as he asserted that his younger son and daughter both had adopted a girl child despite having their biological child and they were proud of this fact.

He shared-

Last time when I visited my daughter ..then that adopted girl child was fighting with elder brother ...and I told to my daughter . this fight signifies that....now she accepted herself as a part of the family....

As mentioned earlier no respondent was found to be in state of self-estrangement. All respondents involved themselves in physical activities barring a female respondent whose eyesight was not good and were trying to rejuvenate old friendships and relations. Somewhere this digital media is found to be a silver lining for them in connecting family, friends, relatives and colleagues. Social media applications like Facebook and WhatsApp, relatively, are found to be popular among aged except for a few aged, who dislike social media due to its unwanted and obscene contents. One respondent shared that WhatsApp medium was more for spreading hatred among people. On the other hand, video calls on smart phones for watching grandchildren's activities are common and welcome fun. This gives more satisfaction as compared to simple voice calls. Except one respondent who preferred landline to mobile citing health issues, others seemed to be rather enjoying. Two of the respondents do not have smart phones; one is the gardener and the other one living in old age home although, the gardener, enjoyed watching videos, on his son's mobile.

Conclusion

Deep analysis of the data calls for categorization of respondents into three broad sections viz; 'not alienated', 'less alienated', and 'alienated'. In the present study, only one case of a couple residing in an old age home can be fitted into the alienated section as they have all the deprivations in terms of all four indicators abridged as PMIS. In the absence of any income, they are forced to live in a charitable shelter for the elderly. Even having no male issue, traditional bonds and patriarchy prevent them to live with the only married daughter. The female being stricken with cardiac problem, they are helpless and hapless to infuse any sense of joy in their life. They are just spinning the days of life in their own assessment. Having no desire, no enthusiasm and spirit they are self-estranged and hence alienated.

The second category of less alienated included three respondents. Though all three respondents were doing financially well in their lives, other biological or social factors were the reason behind their alienation. A retired female professor felt little bit embarrassed due to her visual impairment and hip fracture leading to debility. She found herself confined to home and depended

on her husband for her routine requirements. Another respondent a retired from LDA has no circle for social exchanges. Her wife bears all the responsibility for familial and social hospitality and that too without the support of her husband. He visits his widowed sister daily and no one else. Thus, this is a fit case of self-constrained alienation. Third respondent, a retired IAS officer having lost his wife in an accident is a case of loss of authority. He felt the gap between him and his offspring as they didn't care for his spirits and emotions and were busy in their own lives. Grand children being damn busy in mobile and cyber games seldom had time to share his feelings rendering him into state of estrangement. He became the active member of theosophical society to cope with his boredom and alienation to some extent.

Remaining six respondents came in the category of "not Alienated". It doesn't mean that they had no challenges and problems in adjusting with the passing age. Instead they accepted health problems as such and managed to change themselves with the change in attitudes of children and grand-children and their independent decisions. Despite some interfering troubles, they made themselves engaged with a purpose. Some opted for second career options while others engaged themselves in hobbies. They made peer groups and supported the family financially, physically and emotionally. Among them two respondents were staying away from their children and grandchildren, but they took the help of social media to interact with them regularly e.g. by video calls and other social media applications.

Though most of the respondents were doing well in their lives both economically and socially, it cannot assure the absence of all elements of isolation. Whereas most of the respondents belonged to middle class; a couple from old age home, who was from lower class and was abandoned by the circumstantial factors revealed the situation of those aged who didn't have economic security and came into the bracket of powerlessness in the absence of money and authority. This seems to be in consonance with the Weber's contention that money and status have positional correlation with authority.

Seeman's tool of PMIS was found to be relevant in finding out the phenomena of alienation among aged. Despite the apparent denial of the respondents about their self-estrangement, some vital concerns haunted them continuously. A feeling of physical and to some extent economic insecurity (especially with regarding to lower class) was a big pressure on their minds. Though the respondents from the middle class found one or the other way to keep themselves busy, they still realized some vacuum in their effort to give new meaning to their life. Alternate devices-digital and others are the only available alternate before them to seek essence in their life. They don't blame the society for the change but they want to live their own life on their term i.e. in continuation with past. They only wish that state and society should pave the way for their value, ideals and dignity in their twilight years. Recreational pubs, parks, yoga centers and music café are some desired provisions that they wish to have.

The present study makes the investigator to deduce that the role of family, finance and health is no doubt soothing and most desired for the aged. But the irony of the situation is that the wind of social change has blown these spontaneous covers away from the aged-courtesy to search for employments, consumerism and changing normative structures of society. In the midst of this gloomy picture, digital devices –smart phone and social sites- open up a new door of virtual world for the aged. The seniors too have found a succor in digital world to cope up with new challenges of isolation and estrangement in the last phase of their life

This study of identifying alienation by using PMIS tool among aged and the methods to combat the same somewhere stipulate to study aged from the lower and the upper class of the society to get the more varied picture.

In this case, state and communities should jointly come forward to make appropriate arrangements and infrastructure, for their survival with dignity and help them in making their lives happy and with full zeal. Respondent from the old age home has given a new insight to study, that more detailed study should be done to explore the needs of abandoned aged group. It is also found that debility can be taken along with other factors to explain the process of alienation among aged. And this biological phenomenon triggers off the social phenomenon of powerlessness and isolation.

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