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## Most aged people feel isolated

*While 89 per cent in urban areas feel lonely, figure for rural areas is 77 per cent: Survey*

*About 94 per cent elderly people living with their spouses too feel isolated*

*This also leads to nervousness, anxiety, panic and eating disorders*

NEW DELHI: The isolation syndrome has affected senior citizens in Delhi and the National Capital Region to such an extent that many of them suffer from nervousness, anxiety, panic and eating disorders leading to health disorders and financial imbalance, reveals a new survey by the Research and Advocacy Centre of Agewell Foundation here.

The survey, carried out to gauge the levels of isolation among 1,000 senior citizens who included retired, non-pensioners, housewives and illiterate, revealed that as many as 838 respondents felt isolated or victims of loneliness. The level of isolation among elderly folks living in urban areas was 89.8 per cent in comparison to older persons in rural areas, where 77.6 per cent people feel isolated.

About 94 per cent elderly folks living with their spouses and 97 per cent living alone consider themselves isolated. The situation was good in joint families, but even after the warmth of traditional joint families, older persons were found to be affected by a sense of isolation.

Stating that the process of marginalisation of aged persons had accelerated over the past few decades, the survey points out that senior citizens in the age group of 80-plus were feeling more isolated in comparison with those in the lower old age groups. "Over 93.9 per cent elderly folks in this age group are completely isolated. In the age group of 60 to 70 years, 77.9 per cent said even after an active life they are being isolated in many ways. In the age group of 70-80 years, 87.4 per cent were found complaining of isolation and loneliness."

In the urban areas of Delhi and NCR, 44 per cent older persons were reported isolated socially as well as emotionally. Here older persons were affected more by emotional isolation (26 per cent) than social isolation (25 per cent).

In nuclear families, about 71 per cent of the senior citizens said they were living in isolation because they do not get adequate company of their family members.

Due to loneliness in their lives, aged persons were suffering from unhappiness and dejection, increased substance abuse/smoking, increased trauma levels and health disorders like blood pressure, the survey revealed.

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