

ABSTRACT

SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON AGEING IN INDIA

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Human beings proceed through a predictable course of biological development leading from infancy² to childhood,³ on to adolescence and youth, then to adulthood and middle age and finally to old age and ultimate extinction. This developmental sequence is not simply a biological one; it is also a social process, because the nature of the life cycle- its length, its stages, its problems, its rewards-varies in accordance with the historical and social location of each individual and generation. Today ageing has become an issue and a subject of study and research as people in the medical and nursing professions and sociologists, psychologists, social workers, architects, policy makers as well as the general public are becoming sensitive to the issues and problems of the senior citizens.⁴

In traditional society the old age people were often the dominant member of the family, applied considerable political power in the community and were expected to remain active in the community and to perform some forms of light labour. However these traditional societies are now undergoing rapid changes because of modernization, industrialization and urbanization and are adopting the western culture and philosophy. Now the present society is oriented towards youth, mobility and activity and the senior citizen have no honourable or useful place in society. The knowledge of aging and the aged in this society, was dominated by myths, stereotypes, prejudices, ignorance and personal fears of growing old. Such myths and stereotypes could be dangerous and damaging to both the ageing and the aged.

KEYWORDS: OLD AGE, PROBLEMS AND SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECTS

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²Infancy is the first part of a child's life, it is in a very beginning period and early stage of human development

³Childhood is the time for children to be in school and at play, to grow strong and confident with the love and encouragement of their family and an extended community of caring adults.

⁴ParmjeetKaurDhillon ' Psycho-social aspects of Ageing In India' published by concept publishing company, New Delhi, 1992.