AGING AND A PROFILE OF RETIRED GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES - A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY IN MEERUT

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Abstract

Ageing is not an event but a process. aging is one of the most ignored issues mainly because aged people are considered as disempowered and incompetent persons. Aging can generally be described as the process of growing old and is an important part of the life cycle. Basically, it is a multi-dimensional process and affects almost every aspect of human life. Since Its Inception, the study of aging has typically emphasized changes in demographic transition on the aging of population which has characterized industrial societies throughout the twentieth century but in recent decades, has become a worldwide phenomenon. In this study, the aging concept has been described holistically as retirement. Its aims are to tackle the challenges arising in ongoing research.

Keywords

Ageing, retirement, Problems, gerontology, aging population, social connectedness, etc.

Introduction

The study of aging is of comparatively recent origin and represents a complex and varied intellectual field. It has now become the object of scholarly attention and the subject of specialized and scientific inquiry of an interdisciplinary nature. Better medical facilities, awareness towards maintaining good health, better nutrition and the controlling of communicable diseases have increased the longevity of the people. Hence there is an increase in 'greying' of the population. A large number of elderly persons have become a 'visible' aspect of modern society. Social scientists are now interested in their socio-economic, health and psychological conditions. This idea has been emphasized by Olshansky S.J. and Carnes B.A. (1994; 57). They observe that "Estimating the upper bounds of human longevity is an inherently fascinating quest that has drawn the attention of scientists from a number of disciplines. The possibility of modifying the rate of sense cent and prolonging youth by altering the expression of age-related diseases remains a topic of great interest and speculation". But Maddox (1979; 409) suggests "Later life might well emerge as the "strategic site" for life course research".

Sociological interest in this field is of rather recent origin in the West as Tartler Rudolf (1963; 61) points out "It is still accounting the question whether old age is a legitimate sociological problem". In the Third World countries including India, interest in the study of the aging problem is only now taken up seriously. As Nagesh H.V. (1987; 8) points out "It is a hard reality that the Government and people in India have not yet realized the seriousness of the problem and the necessity of a clearly spelled out policy for the aged. The dismal neglect of the gerontological studies in India is a reflection of this reality". Until the 1980s, gerontological studies were limited to the more developed nations. However, the Vienna Conference held in 1982 opened new vistas in gerontological studies. Indian scholars have now been showing an increasing interest in gerontological studies and old age-related problems, including retirement. The year 1980 generally marks a turning point, as observed by Nair P.S. (1989; 33) "The number of elderlies in the developing regions of the world exceeded those in developed region, with Asian region containing the bulk". Thus, the study of aging is gaining more interest among sociologists. Scholars have applied new approaches and perspectives to understand the various facets of age-related issues. While highlighting the current research developments in gerontology Borgatta F.F. and McClusky M.G. (1981; 9) point out "One aspect of the current gerontological enterprise has been a better description and understanding of the facts about aging".

Ageing, Old Age and Aging Population: Ageing is a process of growing old and old age is a particular phase of that process which is generally considered as the last phase of the life span of a human being. However, that last phrase does not have

a particular chronological age as it depends from individual to individual. The Collin's dictionary of sociology defines old age as, "the last part of the individual's life course, associated with declining faculties, low social worth and detachment from previous social commitments. Instead of biological phase, it is a socially built situation, since its commencement signifies very historically and culturally" (Mohanty: 2004). Since aging is a process, studies on aging have expressed the difficulty of defining the term aged. No unanimous definition worldwide which have agreed to a cut-off point to define a person as aged. The terms elderly, aged, old age, senior citizens have been used simultaneously to refer to old persons. They are referred to as a broad category for defining them while describing the aging process. However, a general conclusion on defining the term aged is the vulnerability to different types of social, psychological, economic and health issues. In other words, change in physical appearance, dementia, weakening of eyesight, retirement, society's perception, change in role 3 and status as a member of family and society, are some of the main factors which consider a person as old. The world is aging as reflected in the many aging studies both at a global and national level. This particular section of the population has drawn attention in the past recent years due to the advancement of medicine and technology which has made an impact on the increased lifespan of the elderly people. Various studies on aging have revealed the growing elderly population in the past and the projections of a further increase based on previous statistics are expressed with concern. In the data collected by Subrahmanyam from the United Nations World Population Projections "the estimated world population in 1995 was 5.7 billion which is expected to cross 10 billion by 2050. From 1950 to 2150, the world population would increase fourfold" (Subrahmanyam: 2005). At the national level, the senior citizens are the fastest-growing section of the population. According to Saxena, the population of 60 plus in 1947 was only 19 million. Today, the figure has risen to 70 million an increase of 50 million since independence. In the next 25 years, the number of aged persons is expected to increase by 107 million by 2025 in India (Saxena, 2006). Aging is an important aspect of the field of sociology. Aging is a sociological problem in the sense that, it is responsible for major 4 changes in the role and status of a person. Durkheim's concept of the Unison with the social bond is of the opinion that the old people experience fast aging if they feel isolated from the social bond in other words, feeling neglected within the family or community.

Basis of Retirement

The scholars used to define old age differs from one society to another, and from one culture to another. It also depends upon the socio-economic background. In this regard, Foner **Nancy (1984)** points out "Determining when a person actually becomes

old or is 'old' is often problematic because there is no consistent definition of old age". The following definitions may be cited to understand who the aged and the elderly are**. Streib G.F. (1956)** defines old age as, "covering the later part of the life of an individual, when physical deterioration begins to appear, is generally marked by a shift in individual's position from active social participationto significant decline in-role performance and from economic self-sufficiency to economic dependence. The role deficit and consequent lowering of morale are primarily considered a problem of adjustment arising out of withdrawal from work, poor health and low socioeconomic status".

Jeff Beaubier (1980) views aging purely from a physiological point of view, who observes that, "Aging is an increasing interference in the transmission of genetic information and consequent randomness in the biological organization".

According to **Timiras (1972)** "Aging may be defined as a decline in physiologic competence that inevitably increases the incidence and intensifies the effects of accidents, disease and other forms of environmental stress".

Retired Employees

The above-mentioned definitions of aged persons define retirement on different parameters but in our research, it would be the age marker. According to the Government rule, the age of retirement should be 60 years.

The status would define retirees' family relations, their health such as physical, psychological and socioeconomic status, etc. after their retirement.

Adjustment will suggest later adaptations to life to fulfill the aspiration by retirees after their retirement.

An Overview of Select Literature

The literature of the research comprises the studies of various sources such as national and international studies. The following literature will enable the study to have a wider approach and understanding of the different aspects that affect the retiree in post-retirement life.

Barry Wellman and **Allan Hall (1986)** in their article on "Social Networks and Social Support: Implications v for Later Life**"** focused on the idea that due to industrialization, urbanization, capitalism, bureaucratization and technological changes had a negative impact on the relationship between the older and younger generations in the family in general. However, they argued that the networks of community ties and familial relationships are still abundant and strong.

Sahoo et al. (2009), it talks about the progress of the sub-discipline on the sociology of aging from a narrow outlook to that of a wide-ranging field in terms of breadth, depth, progress and accessibility of the discipline. It provides the reader

with the overall framework of aging from a sociological point of view beginning with the theoretical perspective followed by the economic and health perspectives and finally the social and cultural perspectives. This, therefore, enables the reader to understand the emergence and significance of this sub-discipline within sociology with the basic foundation of population aging and its diversifying effects be it the social, cultural, health and economic aspects of the elderly.

Bram Lancee and Jonas Radl (2012) various studies are available on social connectedness and its behavior on society. This study analysis how social connectedness would remain and its status in later stage life.

Michelle Pan nor Silver (2018) In her "Retirement and Its Discontents" talked about real and ideological expectations of retirement. She interviewed, doctors, CEOs, elite athletes, professors, and homemakers during their transition to retirement. they face hardship to rejuvenate their aspiration and self-assurance. Results from in-depth interviews put light on their discernment and common concern. She focused on the significance of creating new retirement strategies that would help social connectedness and personal fulfillment while countering ageist decadence about productivity and employment.

Objectives Of The Study

The present study focuses on the following objectives in order to study the retired Teachers of the Meerut district. The objectives are following.

1.   To know the social connectedness in retired persons.

2.   To know the way of living of retired individuals, the extent of their relationships with family members and their adult children.

3.   To know the effects of retirement on the physical health of the retired persons.

4.   To study the plans made by retired persons with regard to their economic status, such as the utilization of pension, provident fund, investments, etc.

5.   To study the adjustment of retired persons to retirement and their change in roles after retirement.

6.   An endeavor would be to suggest some guidelines to improve the life of retired and aged people.

Research Methodology

The study is based on retired employees in the Meerut district. The universe comprises all income groups of retired employees of the government sector. Sample is collected among different income groups such as Group A, Group B, Group C and Group D.The study is based on both primary and secondary data.

The primary data is collected through direct interviews and structured interviews and questionnaires. The secondary data is collected from different published sources such as: Census reports, Department of pension and pensioner' welfare, Treasury officeMeerut, Journals, Research work done by various scholars, etc.

Sample Design

S.No.	Groups	Number of respondents	Sample taken	Dropped due to some reasons	Leftover respondents after dropping	Final Sample
1.	Group A	257	153	48	105	100
2.	Group B	310	250	138	112	100
3.	Group C	328	280	165	115	100
4.	Group D	350	270	169	101	100
	Total	1245	953	520	433	400

Pilot study: In order to test the questionnaire and to find out its pitfalls, the researcher administered the questionnaireto about 50 retired individuals from Meerut city, which has an almost similar socio-cultural background to the area of study, Meerut district.

Significance of the Research

The research addresses problems and aspects faced by respondents. My suggestions might put light on adversaries and miseries of retired government employees. Lacking of timely planned preparation, heterogeneity found in economic, socio-psychological, limited social security after retirement, social connectedness and cultural aspects is well addressed through research.

Conclusion

Ageing, Old Age and Aging Population: Ageing is a process of growing old and old age is a particular phase of that process which is generally considered as the last phase of the life span of a human being. The immediate reduction of income, excess leisure time, loss of colleagues, loss of status which include loss of position and authority within the family and society are some factors that a retiree encounter in a retirement process. some persons may achieve adjustment easily but for some, it may take more time and still for others, it may be difficult adapting to retired life due to various reasons. Planning for retirement, therefore, is essential in order to avoid the problems that come along with it. the present study described it in a lucid way and possess the challenges and solution for the retired persons.

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