# The Sociology of Ageing

## Introduction

The say “Age is just a number” is very common in the modern world. Members of the society experience a higher life expectancy as a result of good health care and nutritional services. However, questions have arisen over the issue of age and its consequences in the contemporary world. This paper shall examine the matters related to the sociology of aging.

## The impact of age on the workforce and economy

As the life expectancy of the population is growing, an increasing percentage of the workforce will age past 60 years. The old workers are however considered less productive as compared to the younger workforce, but how valid is this claim? According to Burtless, (2013) the most important determinants of the labour force’s productivity are age, educational attainment, and previous work experience. The younger, less educated and less experienced employees are not as productive as compared to the elderly, more educated and more skilled employees.

Using one fair point of view on individual worker productivity based on hourly wages the old works of age 60 and above tend to perform better as compared to ordinary workers of age 25 and 59. This is a clear indicator that aging somewhat enhance productivity most likely because of the experience of the individual and the level of education the individual has. The expectation of low productivity of the elderly for a long time has been fuelled by the opinion that the aged are less healthy, less educated, fragile and not properly informed about the contemporary information as compared to the young population. The young labour force is considered stronger, more informed, highly educated and of a good state of health. While of these might be true it does not take into account the individuals who choose to remain employed even at the old age. Studies indicate that the core determinant in the labour market is the level of education and not just age.

However, the aging population has a potential impact on the macroeconomic and fiscal state of a country. A study by James Bullard, Carlos Garriga, and Christopher Waller noted that the young population prefers high inflation as they lack assets and their primary source of income is wages, on the other hand, the older population prefer lower inflation since they depend on the returns from their property. An economy with a majority of seniors conforms more to redistributive policies as compared to an economy composed of mainly young individuals.

## The view of the aged in the society

The views on the aged in the community vary from one culture to another, across many communities the elderly are respected and perceived to be wiser as compared to the younger generation. The traditional societies hold firm belief about aging and memory and more often than not they tend to treat the elderly as a source reference and information. In such societies, the old are held highly and most of the time are engaged whenever an important decision is to be made, on the other hand, the modern societies do not consider the elderly as important as the traditional cultures since they value knowledge based information, unlike the traditional societies which values experience-based knowledge.

In the United States, for instance, ageism has taken root. The elderly are discriminated in the society this has impacted their well-being negatively. The common trend in the modern societies is sending the elderly to facilities of elder care that is provided by either the state of charitable organizations. In India, there is greater emphasis on respect and family care of the elderly.

However, the role of the aged in the society cannot be underestimated. To begin with the elderly are the owners of assets and businesses in the society. They create employment opportunities in various sectors. The elderly. In the African and traditional communities, the old held together the clans and family, the elderly ensured that young children were cared for in the family appropriately. The older also instils value and traditions to the younger generations; they teach the children about respect, honesty love and other socially acceptable codes of behaviour. The old have also witnessed many things that the modern and future generation may not experience this makes them more knowledgeable especially in the matters related to history.

 Some of the older adults possess skills and knowledge that can take edges for the younger generations to or even to understand; this has helped in the growth of the economy of many countries. According to a study by Creighton and Moore, the elderly aged above 50 years contribute about 2.5 trillion annually. Older people contribute to the economy indirectly by caring for their grandchildren and family members. Data from Statistics confirms that over 2.3 million grandparents agree to care for their grandchildren as their parents go to work.

The elderly due to the extended period and the experience they have had throughout their life are considered to be rather wise. This has made them an essential part of the society as the member of the society will consult them from time to time to reach or make a decision that might have an impact on their lives. The elderly are also relevant advisories to various leaders both at home and in the country. They give advice on different contemporary issues in comparison to their past experiences with the issues at hand. These matters include decisions to go to war, marriages and other fibers that contribute to the fabric that holds the society together.

The community needs to understand that the aging process is inevitable and as a biological process it begins at birth and ends after death. The process of aging comes with various physiological implications this includes wrinkles, poor vision, poor hearing and sometimes a number odd diseases. All this imply that the elderly need special care both physically, psychologically, and even emotionally. The aged should, therefore, be held with utmost respect and treated appropriately.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, it is clear that aging doesn’t influence productivity at the place of work. However, the level of education and other factors contribute to the productivity. The elderly are also seen to have a great impact on a countries economy as they possess a lot of assets and equity.

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