CHAPTER – II
SURVEY OF RELATED LITERATURE

Population Aging

The problem of the aged has become a social issue because of the rising proportion of them in the population (International Encyclopaedia of the social sciences, 1968: 186). The advancement in medical science and overall betterment of living conditions have increased the life expectancy all over the world (Woltereck, 1960: 3; Burgess, 1960: 3; Tibbitts, 1964: 301; Burns, 1954: 385; Chowdhry, 1981: 54; Parthasarthy, 1980: 385). In 1950 the life expectancy was only 47 years. The figure in 2025 is expected to be 70. Within this period the population of the world is to treble but the over 60s will increase five fold and 80+s seven time (The Economic Times, 23rd May, 1982:4-5). As per the observation of the UNO, “as a consequence of social development and achievement of the 20th century, long life has become a reality for hundred millions of people throughout the world. In the coming decades it will become a reality for millions more. In the past only a few people attained old age. In future only a few will not reach it.” (Taylor, 1982: 5).

While designating the past hundred years as ‘a century of cognitive decline’ Bruce Yanker (2000: 404) argues that the 20th century has witnessed a
dramatic prolongation of life span but little progress in preventing Age Related Cognitive Decline.¹

Though the phenomenon of population aging is felt to a greater extent in the developed countries the Third World will not be spared. It is estimated that 9.7% of the Third World population are 60 and above. When the absolute figures are compared, in 2000 A.D., there were more people aged 65+ in the Third World countries than their counterparts in the developed countries (Heysmith and Edwardh, 1984 : 34).

In the case of India the life expectancy is increased from 46 years to 54 within a period of 10 years (between 1971 and 1981). In 1991 India had 27 million aged persons, and in the year 2001 the figure touched 76 million, which constituted 7.6% of total population. It is estimated that by the year 2010 the elderly population of our country may be around 124 million constituting over 10% of the total population (www.istholistic.com, 2005). This indicates that, as opined by Mishra, this is the ‘age of aging’ and all over the world including India the proportion of aged population is increasing (Mishra, 1989 : 4).

¹ The Age Related Cognitive Decline (ARCD) means the gradual deterioration of mental functions with increase in age status.
Changing Society and the Elderly

The problem of the aged is not created only due to the increasing proportion of aged population. But another important factor is the decreasing role and status of the old people in the present society. The society deprive them of their physical, social and psychological need satisfactions. According to the views of certain gerontologists their needs are financial and physical security, recognition as useful and significant persons in their own world, association and relation with other’s social and creative activities, passing the leisure time in satisfying ways etc. (Havighurst et. al., 1956:22).

When a person loses his/her capacity to work and earn for the family he/she is found dissatisfied with the nursing care and the lack of participation in decision making in their families. That is, they are no longer heads of their families, possibly due to a lack of economic independence (Basu, 1992:104). According to Havighurst et. al. (1954:311) personal adjustment to aging may be defined as the restructuring of attitudes and behaviour to enable the person to respond to new situations.

In pre-industrial society they had an independent and esteemed position as they had been contributing to the society materially, socially and intellectually (Simmons, 1960:72-77). Their needs were fully satisfied since it was considered as a moral duty of the children to look after the physical and
financial security of their parents (International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 1968: 187). Their wisdom was the driving force for leading the joint family and community (Simmons et al., 1945:16). Even the infirm among the aged was considered as an asset for the younger generation.

When we think about the pre-industrial agrarian Indian society it can be seen that the aged was independent throughout their life. They owned and operated the resources of the family and even the older children were dependent on the aged parents. The children were reluctant to leave their aged parents due to economic reasons and also ties based on love and sentiments. The caste and joint family systems were also facilitators of a leadership position for the aged parents (D’Souza, 1971: 302; Bhatia, 1964: 5).

In a study of the aged among Santhal tribes, conducted by Gupta and Ray (2001:66) the authors blame the break up of the joint family for many of the problems. The Santhal aged, all do some work and one therefore is less of a burden to others. As a result they consider a person old only when a person loses his or her capacity to work and earn for the family.

A large scale erosion of the importance of the older people in society everywhere took place as a result of industrialisation and urbanisation (Kooy, 1963: 59; Russell, 1979: 98). The significance of the knowledge and wisdom of
the elderly became lesser significant as the younger generation became well equipped with positive knowledge. The younger generation replaced the elder from the leadership position in the society (Simmons, 1959: 7; International Encyclopedia of the social sciences, 1968: 188; Rogers, 1979: 199–218). Moreover, the younger generation shifted the responsibility of caring their aged from family atmosphere to formal organisations (Havighurst, 1978: 21).

A study conducted by S.K. Srivasthava and Swetha Agarwal (2001: 87) reveals that more of urban old people living in nuclear family structure feel more lonely and show poor mental health as compared to urban aged living in joint family system.

The system of retirement is peculiar to industrial society. Retirement brings about various other problems. Retirement quickens aging and anxiety psychosis starts working (Nair, 1980: 20). The status of the aged even in family circles declines (Talmon, 1961: 284–295). They become marginalised which in many a times adversely affect their satisfaction of basic needs (Messer, 1968: 277–278). Their material, social and psychological needs satisfaction become quite problematic in industrial society. Lack of food, clothing, shelter, isolation from social situation and extreme solitude make their life miserable (Bongston, 1973: 24–31; Orbach, 1962: 62; Mani, 1980: 4). Hence it should be said that industrial society becomes a hostile environment for the aged. Aging

Saritha Vermani et. al. (2001: 89) say, due to modernisation values of younger generation have been changing and hence have developed individualistic, utilitarian and indifferent attitudes towards elders as liability in the family.

Another phenomenon which contributes to the misery of the old in big ways is to cope with the changing situation. Therefore, in the changed social and psychological environment the behavioural patterns of the old became unfit (Bongston, 1973: 24 – 31; Orbach, 1962: 62; Mani, 1980: 4). The traditional family structure provides necessary requirements for the comfortable living of the elderly. In the extended family the aged used to have a different status in the household. But with a rising number of nuclear families, the elderly seems to have been deprived of certain needs which are not adaptable to them (Rajan et. al., 1999: 39). They aspire for the perpetuation of their privileges which cannot be realised any further. This makes the old people problem cases.

Consequent on the changing social structures the old people have been dethroned from the leadership positions in the family and community. At the beginning of this century most elderly people who lived with their adult children
were considered to be the head of the household. Today, aged parents are usually dependent on their sons and daughters (Dahlin, 1980: 351). The shift from an agricultural society to an industrial society has reduced employment opportunities for the older persons (Friedman, 1960: 120 – 162). Clark Tibbits finds that continuous expansion and growth of productivity through high energy technology of the present have created a situation of abundance in modern industrial society (Tibbits, 1960: 336). From the point of view of the older persons, the loss of some of their former tasks such as instruction of the young or supervision of household crafts may have diminished their utility (Talmon, 1961: 284 – 295). Elderly may be reduced from decision makers to decision followers (Khan, 1989: 18).

In India where the family ties are very stronger are getting loosened. The ascribed status is giving way for achieved status. On realisation of this erosion of status the old becomes frustrated (Siddaiah, 1966: 180; Kurian 1972: 225; Singh, 1962: 40 – 42). Thus as Chowdhary points out aging is not only a biological process rather it has a cultural element too. Society thinks that one grows older and cross 55 or 60 years he will not have much anticipation. People think that he would not compare his position with other’s but accept what is given to him by the family. Expressing their own wishes by elderly is usually not tolerated or appreciated by the family (Nalini; 2001: 303). This necessitates thorough readjustments on the part of elderly persons (Chowdhry, 1981: 53).
Theoretical Analysis of Aging

Various theories explain the experience of elderly people in society. They have been developed from the major theoretical paradigms in Sociology.

Disengagement Theory

Disengagement theory relates the disengagement of elderly people from positions of social responsibility to the orderly operation of the society. Disengagement theory was an early attempt to explain how and why society defined the elderly by younger people. Making use of the ideas of Talcott Parsons, the most influential architect of the structural – functional paradigm, Elaine Cumming and William Henry (Cumming and Henry, 1961:373-93) based disengagement theory on the biological reality of human decline and eventual death. Society must devise some means to persist, they reasoned, even though it ultimately loses each of it's individual members. This is accompanied by the order by transfer of various status and roles from elderly people to those who are younger. In this way patterns of status and role remain largely stable, although the people holding the statuses and roles change over time. If incompetence or death was the only basis for this changing of the guard, there would be considerable social disruption because many jobs would be left vacant. Industrial societies
arrange for statuses and roles to be transferred to younger people while older people are still functioning productively.

Disengagement theory also states that this process benefits elderly people themselves. As people's physical capacities diminish, they presumably welcome relinquishing some of the pressures of performing occupational tasks. Furthermore, elderly people enjoy greater freedom of behaviour; they are usually not expected to abide as rigidly by cultural norms as they were in middle age. Thus, we are likely to define unusual behaviour on the part of the elder people as harmless eccentricity rather than as a socially dangerous form of deviance. Disengagement also provides the opportunity, if health and finances permitting, of course, for the elderly to engage in personally satisfying activities of their own choosing (Palmore, 1979: 431).

This is applicable in industrial societies because of rapid social change. In pre-industrial societies the elderly do not typically disengage from social life as they do in industrial societies.

**Activity Theory**

Activity theory, sometimes called substitution theory, relates a high level of social activity to personal satisfaction in old age. Developed largely in reaction to disengagement theory, activity theory draws heavily on the social
interaction paradigm (Havighurst, 1968: 161). This approach stresses that individual build a sense of self and a social identity based on their statuses and roles in society. Old age characterised by disengagement may produce little satisfaction in many elderly people.

Research in support of activity theory has found that personal satisfaction in old age is related to a person’s level of activity (Havighurst et. al., 1968: 63; Neugarten, 1977; Palmore quoted in Macconis, 1979:358-359).

Social Conflict Analysis

The social conflict approach emphasizes the importance of age stratification by which older and younger people compete for resources in society.

The social conflict approach is derived from the ideas of Karl Marx. In industrial societies elders are non productive groups, where economically productive activities are the most highly valued. Elderly people are socially devalued as non producers, but not feared because they are non threatening (Spitzer, 1980: 175).

Elderly people are costly workers at the same time they are less productive. According to Atchly (1982: 263) since younger workers are readily
available, employers have historically sought to replace the elderly with these less costly workers.

Social conflict analysis stresses the importance of social stratification. Upper class elderly enjoy more social advantages than others because they have more economic security, better medical care and greater options for personally satisfying activity in later life.

Changing Society

Social change takes place when there is structural change in society. With technological and institutional innovations there are changes in economy as well as in the aspirations of the people, that is, alteration in the structure and content of a society. According to Gillin and Gillin social changes are variations from the accepted mode of life whether due to alteration in geographical condition, in cultural equipment, composition of the population or ideologies and whether brought about by diffusion or invention within the group (Gillin and Gillin quoted in Kuppuswamy, 1988:43).

William Ogburn on social change explains, since society was assumed to be created by man it was assumed that the men with the more complex and elaborate civilizations had greater mental abilities and superior brains. It is not the society that is evolving but the culture. Four factors that explain cultural
evolutions are invention, accumulation, diffusion and adjustment. Invention includes the combination of existing and known elements of culture, material or non material or a modification of one form to a new one. Inventions result from three factors mental ability, demand and the existence of other cultural elements out of which the inventions are fashioned.

Acculturation occurs when more new elements are added to the cultural base than those lost. Society is both behaviour and an accumulation. Biological behaviour is constant overtime, but learned behaviour is accumulative. The accumulation of culture tends to grow exponentially. One seminal invention can proliferate many others.

Diffusion means the spread of inventions from one area to others, usually from the area of their origin. The evolution of culture is more rapid because of diffusion.

Adjustment of one part of society to another is important in understanding the evolution of culture. A society on equilibrium experiences no social evolution. A society in disequilibrium makes adjustments and evolves in order to re-equilibrate.
Theories of social change reveals that the basic assumption in the ideas of progress and evolution is that change is the characteristic feature of human society. Another assumption is that change is inevitable. Change is basically the result of the operation of forces within the society or culture.

Modernisation is a stage in the changing society. Various trends in social relationships and changes in values are included in the concept of ‘modernization’. Modernization is the characteristic feature of modern society. The means of modernization are industrialization, urbanization, secularization, rise of new social classes, social change, westernisation and democratization (Kansal, 2004: 208). The main feature of modernization is the building up of an ‘open society’ in which individuals of talent, enterprise and training can find places in the society appropriate to their achievement.

M. N. Srinivas (quoted in Kuppuswami, 1988:61) used the term westernization to indicate change brought about in Indian society and culture as a result of over 150 years of British rule and the term subsumes changes occurring at different levels – technology, institutions, ideology and values. The westernized groups not only used the language of the master but also adopted his style of life. Thus the term westernization cover 1) the behavioural aspects like eating drinking etc. 2) the knowledge aspects like literature, science etc. and 3) the value aspects like humanitarianism, equalitarianism, secularism etc.
Changes in the Material and Socio-Cultural Life Patterns

Material life is fast changing in accordance with the application of modern health technology, application of scientific technology to the economy, urbanization and mass education and literacy. Young people who tend to be most mobile members of society, are attracted to the city by the promise of exciting changes and new career opportunities. Once there, they marry and establish permanent residence, they break up from the extended family. This results in inter-generational gap and social difference between them.

Youngsters go abroad for better education and employment and it become difficult for them to come back. Their relationship continues only over the telephone. Now more and more women are entering into jobs. According to their busy schedule food habits are also changing. Explosive growth by India by India's fast food industry has fuelled a dramatic change in eating habits. People are snacking in a new way. Many children do not take lunch boxes to school instead they eat fast foods.

With the western look pouring into the country India has seen a drastic change in taste towards dressing. A new style of dressing emerged called the fusion or the Indo-Western look. Though along with the changing times, different regional dressing in India acquired the change with the changing urban
style, all over the nation it is the 'Salwarkameez’ that is increasingly being accepted in today’s fashion world.

The influence of media on people is increasing. Print media was supposed to be threatened by moving images on the television set. It is estimated that there are 150 satellite and terrestrial channels available in India today. India has nearly 10 crore homes with TV sets and half of them are cable and satellite homes. Computer is also spreading fastly. Even middle income group posses Refrigerator, LPG Stove, Microwave oven, Washing machine and modern furniture items.

Industrialization makes society essentially urbane. Industrialization necessitates complex set of tools and machines used in production of goods as well as in transportation and communication. Because of the advances in technology a sizeable proportion of the population engaged in agriculture goes down. Over crowding of people in urban areas become inevitable because of the factory method of production, hereditary or caste based status is replaced by achieved status and mobility from lower class to the higher class becomes highly fluidal. There is great division of labour and specialization. Increase in voluntary associations, because people are organized on the basis of voluntary organizations, is another impact. There is an increase in the behavioural disorder and crime. The incidence of mental and moral breakdown increases. Mob violence, juvenile
delinquency, organised crime, neurosis, psychosis etc. become the characteristic feature of industrial society.

In India one finds heterogeneity of socio-economic structure and a variety of social tensions and conflicts. Social consequences of urbanization are:

Decline in Social sympathy

- Lack of social control
- Decline in the influence of Religion
- Decline in the family control
- Change in the status of women and aged persons
- Change in the institution of marriage
- Change in the family structure
- Superiority of male ratio in population
- Professionalization of entertainments
- Security of living and accommodation
- Slums
- Change in moral values
- Break down of joint family
- Increase in evil professions
- Increase in the incidents of crime
- Increase in Juvenile delinquency
- Corruption, conflict and competition

(Kansal, 2004:189).
After independence there has been visible improvements in the living standards of large number of people who eat better, dress better, invest sizeable amount of their income in the education of their children, living in better housing and spend sizeable sums in buying such consumer durables as refrigerators, TV sets, Washing machines, food processors, two wheelers, cars and VCRs (Srinivas, 1972: 180).

A key element in upward mobility is education for without it good jobs will not be available. Living standards cannot be improved, good marriage cannot be contracted, and access to other elements of high status denied. There is severe competition for obtaining admission to good schools; from the point of view of parents English medium schools.

Because of the demand for admission English medium schools charging high fees in addition to the sizeable amount of admission fees. Similar is the problem of admission of medical, engineering, technical and professional colleges. Due to the reservation of backward castes and other backward classes large number of ‘good students’ from forward castes are rejected. Another source of the admission to these colleges is through capitation fee. The result is the creating of dozens of unemployed doctors, engineers etc., but society continues to fetch a big dowry which not only improves the family finances but also a social standing (Srinivas, 1972 : 182).
Another trend is our qualified skilled youths is that they want to take their employment in developed countries, the result is ‘brain drain’ from India to the developed countries. The middle class family has shrunk, elderly parents living by themselves and receiving dollar cheques from their offspring have increased. Another change is growing consumerism. The advertisement business is also booming along with it.

TV watching has become an addiction with large number of people. It was found that TV proved to be an important source of information and entertainment. The internet also became a primary source of information for news and research.

When tools of communication determine the content of the message, the act of communication increasingly get alienated from real communities and often give rise to imagined communities who are mechanically connected through newspapers, TV or internet, but originally alienated from each other.

The teenagers are recognizable by their distinctive dress, hair styles, habits and lifestyle. Older people seem to be bewildered at the attitudes and behaviour of their teenage relatives (Srinivas, 1972: 185).
Political power become more or less the supreme value for a very large number of people. The recent and significant development is the coming together of the politicians and the 'Godman' who are engaged in welfare activities.

The contemporary situation of all developing countries clearly shows the influence of the cultural factor on social change. New techniques are available but they cannot be applied because of the low availability of capital.

Even though caste rigidity is reduced, inter caste tensions and conflict is still in our society.

The constitution has provided a fundamental right. The equality of sexes changes the position of women in Indian society. Availing themselves of the opportunities in the field of education women are now taking their rightful place as citizen in a free democracy. But the rural parents and the parents in backward classes do not want their girls to go to schools and become educated.

Modernization is closely related to universal literacy, technical training and liberal education. The greater barrier to modernize a society is the cultural attitude of its people against manual and skilled labour and in favour of white collar jobs. Particularistic outlook with respect to caste, creed and language inhibit the development of universalistic outlook which is necessary to promote
national integrator. Tharabai (2002: 10) opines that social changes in the society affects elderly population also. As they grew old, the support system of the old shrink down giving very little opportunity for the elderly population to maintain their already developed personality.

As far as social change in Kerala is concerned agrarian society undergo structural changes in terms of the ownership of land, land use, levels of income and sources of income and level of education. All these variables have contributed to the occupational mobility over the generations. Unlike other states the agriculture sector in Kerala has been dominated by commercial crops like coconut, rubber, tea, coffee and spices.

Fillipo Oscella and Caroline Oscella (2002: 336) point out that people in Kerala articulate the drive for mobility in terms of progress. Here, caste rigidities and beliefs and practices attached to the fundamentals of caste have been reduced.

Another social change in Kerala is the drop in the population growth. The sex ratio and literacy rate which have serious implications on the socio-cultural life of a community. In the case of Kerala the former has further gone up from 1036 females per 1000 males in 1991 to 1058 per 1000 in the
present (2001) census. Literacy rate has also gone up and it is the top among all the states and union territories (Census of India; 2001).

In most of the families of Kerala, the care giver – care taker relationships have taken a new turn in the context of increased migration of people to other parts of the country or world. Women also go for work outside and uphold new outlook towards life (Nayar, 1987: 34).

Though the old are taken care by the family a shift in the care giving system is seen recently. Kerala is having the maximum number of old age homes in India and the proportion of admission seekers to the institutions is shooting up (Irudaya Ranjan, 1995:179-213).

**Changing Emotional and Psychological Environments.**

Stress is best viewed as a subjective transaction between an individual and his situation. It results from an unbalance between the perceived demand placed upon the individual and the perceived response capability. The greater the perceived imbalance, the greater the stress felt by the person (Lazarus quoted in Ward, 1970:121). Many every day situations stress creating.

New technology creates new occupations and the young are most likely to become the occupational pioneers of developing societies. The aged
remain in more traditional occupations which are less in demand. It also creates additional pressure for retirement. Another aspect of modernization and urbanization result in breaking up of joint families by attracting younger people towards cities. This also creates 'empty nest syndrome' – The loneliness of older parents. Cowgill (1974: 13) says, the elderly are abandoned socially and psychologically, making them unnecessary marginal and alien to their own society.

Because of the tensed life of modern people, high blood pressure, nerves tension, hyper acidity, insomnia are becoming indicators of middle and upper class status. In modern Indian family system, the comfortable living enjoyed by widows, orphans and dependents including the aged is not possible. The spontaneous respect and regard accorded to the attachment are absent (Selvaraju et. al., 2002: 54).

Joint family met the social economic and emotional needs of it's members. Break down of joint family system results in selfishness, lack of adjustment, refusal to compromise and with more and more younger woman entering into jobs, the care and attention given to the elderly persons are affected. At the same time the need for care giving due to the expansion of morbidity and prevalence of chronic diseases and the prolongation of the period of care due to the extension in the span of old age necessitated larger number of care than ever
before. The nuclear family has to face yet another problem, high cost of rearing and education of children. In these changing circumstances, the inevitability of putting the elderly in old age homes is increasingly felt in the society. In Kerala a large number put their parents in old age homes (Moli, 2004:10). According to David (2001:79) today, children are as much in need of emotional support of elders as children of earlier generation were. Older generation is also willing to give it to them. But unfortunately they live in different worlds. The younger ones are exposed to and choicelessly brought up with toys which was not the situation earlier.

When elders get sick and immobilised they face special psychological problems and needs. They begin to live emotionally in their own worlds, mostly based on their distant past which cannot easily be shared by the children.

A study done by Srivasthava reveals that a number of old people living in nuclear family structure feel more lonely and shows poor mental health (2001:58).

The family disorganization is increased because of emigration of individual family members to other countries and emigration of whole families from country side to the city. The real cause of family disorganization is influence
of certain new values such as new sources of hedonistic satisfaction, new vanity values, new individualistic types of economic organisations and new forms of sexual appeal. This presupposes not only a contact between the individual and outside world but also the existence in the individuals personality of certain attitudes which make him or her respond to these new values. New values acting on old 'we-attitudes' eventually generate new 'I-attitudes' in which individual wishes are separated in his/her consciousness from those of other family members. Disorganization of the family as a primary group is unavoidable consequence of modern civilization. The appearance of new individualistic attitudes may be counteracted by the effects of other causes. A suppression of new attitudes may develop chiefly influenced by the primary community of which the family is a part- provided that family solidarity is still valued. It is evidently impossible to revive the original family psychology after it has been disintegrated (http : //ssr.ochicago.edu/PRELIMS/change/chmiscz.html).

**Changes in the Spiritual Life**

Religion is one of the oldest basic socio-cultural characteristics associated with mankind and civilizations created by them over thousands of years of known history. Different communities and people perceive religion in their own unique way. Only a handful claim to be atheist. Under the tensed circumstances prayer and meditation and visits to temples and pilgrimage centres offer some relief to the people. India, it’s people, its infrastructure and indeed it’s
very soil encourage and breed spiritualism, allowing religions to thrive, flourish and prosper (Kuppuswami, 1988: 73).

As the global community becomes increasingly capitalistic, the quest for spirituality grows in urgency. India boasts of the presence of every major religion in the world, as well many of their off shoots and facts, all being supported nourished and living in comparative harmony. Prayer is one of the unavoidable part of spirituality. St. John Chrysostom says “prayer is a harbour in the storms of life, an anchor for those who are storm-tossed, the treasure of the poor, the security of the rich, the healing of the sick, the preservation of health. Prayer banishes evil things, and perceives the good” (St. John Chrysostom quoted in Monk Moses, 1999: 3).

Though religion and spiritualism are emphasised as means to shore-up the aimlessly rifting modern society the ideologies and practices related to them have considerably changed. Positive religion is the point of attraction of modern society. Cultic religions which take into account the necessity of a holistic approach to human life may be considered as recent editions of spirituality and religions life.
Adaptation of the Elderly to the Changing Social Situations

As the changes in the social situation are very swift even in underdeveloped countries like India, elderly persons are to face severe stress. The adaptation has much to do with the environmental conditions, threats and opportunities existing there (Kuhlen, 1959: 853). Therefore, it is to be pointed out that the nature of adjustment with environmental condition is culture specific (Russell, 1979: 9). In the present day situation as the changes occurring in the social system are much beyond the withstanding capacity of older people, maladjustment will be greater. That is, the modern technological society makes the adjustment of the old to its changing profiles very difficult (Simons, 1959: 7).

The old persons have to depend on themselves for their various need satisfaction. As we know, their resources will be very limited and as such their stage is very critical for them (Havighurst, 1956: 22).

‘Adaptation’ in gerontological studies has been mostly used to refer to the state of harmony not only within itself but also with environment (Kuhlen, 1959: 852). According to Havighurst (1957: 172) there is no difference between these two harmonies. In practical sense the term may be used to refer to the state of leading a better life in later years (Verzer, 1969: 98; Havighurst, 1963: 299). In order to draw up welfare policies of every society adaptation studies are important (Havighurst, 1957: 173).
A study done by Havighurst et. al. (1954 : 311) say, personal adjustment of aging may be defined as the restructuring of attitudes and behaviour to enable the person to respond to new situations to achieve the integrated expressions and demands of society. Personal and social adjustments are closely interrelated.

In fact, studies on adaptation or adjustment are very rare. Whatever studies have been taken place are in Western European Countries. According to Folson and Morgan, factors like good health, freedom from liabilities, pleasant social and emotional relations with friends and family members, hobbies, work like activities and independent living in own houses are positively associated with good adjustment (Folson et. al. quoted in Donchue, et. al., 1960 : 379). Landis has found that economic independence, high education, marriage at the right time, small family, low death rate of children, infrequent residence and job change, life secureness, good health, employment, hobby, visits to friends and church and preference for living with children are the variables positively correlated with adjustment (Landis quoted in Donchue et. al., 1960 : 376). Burgess and his associates have identified certain factors associated with good adjustment in old age. They are satisfactory health, married life, good family relationship and friendship, participation in leisure time and other activities, membership of an organisation, absence of unhappy experience, self concept of being middle aged, feeling of permanent security, social status equal to that held previously, plans for
future, religiosity and belief in rebirth (Burges quoted in Donahue et. al, 1960: 379). Various other studies also have identified many of these factors as determinants of adjustment (Shanes, 1950; Britton, 1951; Albrecht, 1951; Havighurst, 1953 and Morrison and Kristjenson, 1958 quoted in Saraswathi Misra 1989:11-13).

According to Simmons quoted in Tharabai (2002: 72) there are recurrent basic interests which manifest themselves in old people in all societies. They are:

1. to preserve life as long as possible.
2. to seek release from wearisome exertion and get protection from physical hazards.
3. to maintain active participation in group affairs.
4. to meet death honourably and comfortably.

Rosow indicated that in the measurement of adjustment in old age, social participation and life satisfaction or happiness are the important factors that are to be considered (Rosow, 1963: 198). Havighurst also admitted that these two criteria are indicators of successful aging (1963:300). Further, Mishra argues that old people’s socio-economic status, health status, their relationship and interaction with various group of people and their activities related to occupation, hobbies, religion are factors which determine their relationship in later years (Mishra, 1989: 12). She divides these factors into two categories, namely, situational and
behavioural factors. Situational factors are those factors which indicate the social, economic and physical situation of old people. Education, Income etc. are getting more importance with regard to adjustment in old age. There are two very important variables related to adjustment and they are socio-economic status and physical health. According to Mishra they are considered to be the basic variables in any analysis. These factors are also admitted by Estroile and Thompson as determinants of old age adjustments (Estroile and Thompson, 1957 : 191).

According to Donahue, et. al. the first major studies of adjustment in old age were conducted by Folson and Morgan in 1937 and Landis in 1947 (Donahue, 1960 : 330 – 406). As Morgan and Folson stated they have used the present life happiness and the index of adjustment and reported that factors like good health, freedom from liabilities, pleasant social and emotional relations with friends and family members, hobbies worth like activities and independent living in own house are positively associated with good adjustment (Morgan & Folson, 1937 : 223-226).

Behavioural factors are concerned with behaviour of the aged people such as their interaction and relationship with other groups. On the basis of level of interaction two groups can be identified, the ‘active’ and the ‘disengaged’. These two characteristics have high significance in old age adjustment. There are two views among gerontologists. One view postulates that activity facilitates
meaningful aging. Disengagement is also viewed as conducive for successful aging (Mishra, 1989: 13). Irving Rosow highlights that the probability of social interaction of older persons is significantly affected by the availability of age peers of similar social status (1963: 200). However, there is no concrete theories on this aspect in gerontological literature.

**Elderly Persons and Kerala Community**

The foregone literature analysis shows that studies on the consequences of population aging (both from individual and social perspectives) are scarce in our country. Perhaps, being an underdeveloped country the problems might not have cropped up here and the need for such studies would not have been felt much. However, the interesting point which the investigator would like to highlight is that in Kerala also which is a state which rubs shoulders with other western developed societies in social and demographic characteristics, there is a dearth of this kind of studies. (The different profiles of the community are given in Chapter – IV).

According to the 2001 census, there are 28 states and seven union territories in the country. Among these, Kerala has maintained its lead with 10.84% of the population aged 65+. This is the first state in India to complete demographic transition (Bhat and Irudaya Rajan, 1992: 440-8; Irudaya Rajan et
al., 1993; Zachariah et. al., 1994; Zachariah and Irudaya Rajan, 1997; Irudaya Rajan, 1998). Irudaya Rajan and Harichandran noted that all the states in India sooner or later follow this process called demographic transition (Irudaya Rajan and Harichandran, 1994: 331-47).

The old-old (80+) in Kerala is just 2,90,000 in 1991 and are expected to increase to 1 million in 2021 and further to 33 million by 2051 (Irudaya Rajan, 2002: 197). A peculiar feature of aging in Kerala is this growth rate of the old-old. The highest proportion of elderly is reported from Thrissur district followed by Ernakulam. The lowest is from Waynad.

As cited by Irudaya Rajan et al., in India 60% of the old age homes face a heavy rush for getting accommodation. Among the states Kerala has the highest number of aged persons in Old Age Homes. Their study reveals almost half of the inmates of the old age homes are keen on living in the family but cannot (Irudaya Rajan, 1989: 19).

According to Packiam the happy and worth while life at the old age will depend on how well a person had anticipated, this inevitable stage in his life and had prepared himself to accept and adjust to the hard realities of powerlessness, dependence and loneliness. It will also depend on the innovative support system for the elderly offered by the society (2002: 216). Actually,
dependency in family is a problem and need because of the lower physical strength and lack of suitable occupations for their age.

Quite a few studies have been taken place under the inspiration of the Centre for Gerontological Studies, Thiruvananthapuram. The Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram also have undertaken certain studies on old age problems. A study undertaken by Joseph on intergenerational interaction in Kerala community revealed that areas in and topics on which interaction taking place between the older and younger generation are getting reduced and this create much agony and adjustment problems to the old (Joseph, 1998: 19). Havighurst et. al. (1968: 131) reveal the decreased social interaction that characterizes old age results from the withdrawal by society from the aging person and the decrease in interaction proceeds against the desires of the most aging men and women. Retirement spells reduced income, diminished physical responsibility and a general decline in health and vigour. All these creates low morale and withdrawal symptoms from the society (Sobha et. al., 2002: 230). Joseph in another study on the retirement effect concluded that male retires have greater problems to cope with the retired life as their sphere of activities is reduced. The females are contented with their household responsibilities and they don’t feel retired life as a role-less period of life (Joseph, 1989: 19). An enquiry into the Problems of the elderly people in slums concluded that the old in slums
are facing serious psychological deprivations and coping with them is very
difficult because they have external origins (Joseph, 1989: 19-21).

A study was conducted by Ashraf and Jayaram on Generation gap in Kerala. The study pointed out the adverse attitude of the younger generation to the older generation. The younger generation considers the older as dependent on and problem for them. The increasing demand for the care of elderly has it's base on the peculiar socio-economic and demographic setup. The existing gap among the different generations on their social, economic and demographic characteristics create a preference of the younger to settle elsewhere, usually, away from their parents and mother land. Such instances make wear and tear on the family care of elderly (Ashraf and Jayaram, 1996: 17).

Nair, in his study about Morbidity and Inter-generational Support Among the Aged in Kerala has noted that the level of morbidity is quite high especially among males. The intergenerational support received from children appears less prominent and this calls for higher levels of state intervention for the care of aged (Nair, 1996: 278).

Break down in social values or familial support and personal problems in coping with the changing social support scenario, causes infringement of the basic rights of the aged leading to feeling of isolation and insecurity of the
aged (Sobha et. al., 2002 : 230). Even in families in which old people are looked after without manifestation of tension and distancing there are widening gaps between generations. As a matter of fact today’s world of technology forces too many attitudinal differences among age groups (David, 2002 : 78).

In Kerala the incidence of chronic and degenerative diseases is increasing very fast and this has called for a shift in the technology and management of health care (Nair, 1998 : 89). In Kerala, Medical Services are within the reach of even remote villages. But the concept of geriatric illness and geriatric care have not become popular. Doctors either treat old age diseases like other diseases or like terminal diseases (Kattakayam, 2002 : 242). Palmore and Kevitt suggest that health is the most important factor in predicting life satisfaction among elderly, in contrast to younger age where material well being and the family are the most important source of satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Palmore and Kevitt quoted in Nair, 1998 : 89).

The study conducted by Irudaya Rajan et al. in Kerala and Tamil Nadu finds that besides economic reasons, family quarrels and handicaps induced the elderly more into the old age homes (Irudaya Rajan et al., 1995 : 179 - 213). It is believed that the younger have a wider social circle than the old. Moreover, the social circle of the older people tends to be narrower because most of the young do not enjoy their company and usually avoid them (Singh, 1991 :54). According to
Joseph (2001: 51) elderly persons, generally, have opportunity to see TV programmes which are often contaminated with objectionable contents according to their value system as the medium is usually, controlled by youths and children. Further, TV programmes distract their daily routines and they are maladapted to such situations.

The Literature survey shows that the problem formulated is worth studying as serious studies carried out are quite a few and insufficient. Due to the speedy westernisation and modernization processes the older persons in the community are progressively marginalised and hence facing problems in a cumulative manner. The old is disrespected by the younger generation, value shifts in the community are severe, material cultures are fast expanding, behavioural patterns are changing and, in short, the environment is becoming hostile for the elderly. In these circumstances it is significant to enquire into such issues as the status loss of the elderly in the community, changing material and non-material life of the community and their impact on the life of the elderly and the coping mechanisms adopted by them. This will go a long way in formulating policies for the welfare of the elderly in the community. Accordingly, this study is attempted with the objectives given in the next chapter on methodology.