Chapter 1
Introduction

The phenomenon of old age is a universal fact in the human civilization and society. The word 'age' represents the span of time a person has existed and if the time of his living is called by the society as “aged”. The term aged is interpreted in various ways. On global standard aged is a person who is above 65 years. In India people living above the age of 60 are known as aged. It is a well-known fact that aging is the biological process of getting old. According to the chart of human growth and development the old age of a person starts after sixty years till he/she dies. Recently there has been a major change in the perception of our society for those who are living above the age of 60. Earlier, even a century ago the outlook of the people in regard with the old age people was different from what it sustains in the present. A decade back aging was not considered as a social problem. In fact the old people were considered as the accumulators of knowledge and sagacity. The notions of Vanprasta and Sanyasa were the social devices that inspired the aged to divert their attachment from the social activities. The joint families following their socio-cultural rituals played an eminent role in defining and shaping the life of the old age people. They used to consider the elder members of their families as an integral part of their ownselves. The aged people use to live with their own families. The economy that was built on agriculture assigned prominent roles in the community which rendered a respectful space for the older generation. But the rapid urbanization leads to the development of modern industry, technology, and modern institutions that changed the old age style of living in our human society. The progress and the effect of medical science enormously changed the social living and behavioral pattern of the modern man. The effect of the progress of medical science tremendously changed the life style of the people. Eminent scientific researches and successful experiments in the field of medical science led to an increase of life expectancy which eventually enhanced the population of aged resulting to a major concern in the present society. Commercialization in the field of agriculture and market centered economy lessened the role of aged in the contemporary society. Following the line of American module pattern and the influence of western culture, played a devastating role in breaking the joint family structure in our society. The concept of nuclear families was initiated as a consequence the modern families
became paralyzed and incapable to fulfill the demands of the aged people. Providing the shelter for aged in that scenario was a great difficulty. This resulted to the emergence of old age homes for the care of the elderly people. The consequences also resulted to the necessity of home nurses in those health care centers for the aged. In an estimated fact by 2030 (the baby boomers), the generation born between 1946 and 1964, will become senior citizens and that will constitute the one third population of the world. At that time the issue of old age will turn out to be very crucial for the society. The estimated fact provides a perspective which displays the shift in the conception of old age that lies somewhere in between two systems; these are traditional and modern culture where the values and outlook are different in their respective nature. A highly proclaimed thesis of Stearns demonstrates the idea that in pre-industrial societies the condition of the aged was better due to the intensive care and attention rendered by the community and family. Apparently we can observe that the social well-being of the aged is declining as our society is swiftly shifting from the traditional to the modern model. However, the comprehensive notion of modernity which includes social, cultural and economic aspects has changed the social genesis of the aged. Nonetheless, in modern and traditional culture, the old age has been a socially engendered reality. The concept is based on the social relativity to specific social context. The sociology of knowledge is concerned with the connection between human thought and the social context where it is generated. A study of various aspects of society such as social, economic, cultural, and political issues is required in order to understand the deeper concept of old age.

The elderly people in India

The United Nations World Assembly on Ageing, held at Vienna in 1982, formulated a package of recommendations which gives high priority to research related to developmental and humanitarian aspects of ageing. The plan of action specifically recommended that: “International exchange and research cooperation as well as data collection should be promoted in all the fields having a bearing on ageing, in order to provide a rational basis for future social policies and action. Special emphasis should be placed on comparative and cross-cultural studies in ageing” (United Nations World Assembly: 1987). The issue of ageing since last two decades for both
developed and developing countries are becoming a major concern for the policy makers all over the world. A common policy might not be possible to formulate for underdeveloped, developing and developed countries.

In India, research studies haven't been much attempted regarding the problems and issues which the grey population face since majority of its population aged less than 30 and hence, focus is mainly on the fulfillment of basic needs and proper development of the children and youth. Also, the traditional Indian society and the age-old joint family system have been instrumental in safeguarding the social and economic security of the elderly people in the country. But, in recent years, rapid changes in social scenario and nucleated family set-ups have been observed which are likely to affect elderly people adversely in emotional, physical and financial insecurity. This problem has drawn the attention of the policy makers and administrators at the central and state governments, voluntary organizations and civil society.

For the welfare of elder people, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India adopted ‘National Policy on Older Persons’ in January, 1999. This policy provides broad guidelines to State Governments for taking action for welfare of older persons in a proactive manner by devising their own policies and plans of action and hence, defines ‘senior citizen’ as a person who is 60 years old or above. It strives to ensure well-being of senior citizens by providing specific facilities such as existing public services for senior citizens are user friendly, concessions, relief, services, financial security, health care and helping them cope with problems associated with old age.

Life span or ageing of any given population of any place is dependent upon two vital factors, namely the trends of fertility and mortality rates. Generally, Low birth rates and long life expectancies tend to push the population to the category of ageing. The demographic study of Indian population shows that the percentage of people ageing sixty or more has gone up considerably. Recent developments in medical sciences and better treatment facilities have been blessings as even the percentage of people above the age of eighty is scooting up over the years. The opposite trend, that is, the ratio of working age people (15–59 years) is declining against the number of elderly people. Even within the working age group average age is also increasing. The ageing population for developing countries like India is fast becoming a challenge as a huge pressure comes upon the national exchequer to meet the various socio economic benefits for them. Some of the prominent challenges are catering for pension benefits, health care
expenditures, fiscal discipline, savings levels etc. Recently, the demand for one rank one pension for the defence employees has been a great burden for the country and it cannot shun away from its responsibility, being a welfare nation. It is estimated that by 2026, North India would witness younger population, especially the working group, compared to the South India. Whereas, by the same time, South India in general and Kerala in particular are likely to see more ageing people.

One interesting fact is that a paradoxical situation would arise with Kerala having produced highest number of educated working people with average age (median age) above 35 years and Uttar Pradesh having been burdened with uneducated or semi educated working population with average age below 30 years. Though the irregular scenario in population and ageing is disturbing, yet it is unstoppable in near future as by the year 2026 India’s population above 60 years will be double against what was in 2001. Thus, the elderly people will account for 12.17 percent of overall population. The other estimates reflect that there is chances of some more irregularity in population explosion, given the irregularity in pace of growth. Certainly, there would be differentiation in rural and urban population and further, the ratio would sharply vary in cases of certain states that are already burdened with numerous socio-politico-economic evils.

Despite rapid and consistent economic growth, India would face a problem of huge ageing population who may be far poorer than their counterpart in the West. In India, people who have worked in organized sector get pension and other retirement benefits after the age of 60 but for others, Government of India and State Governments, have very nominal old-age pension coverage which varies from Rs.200/- to Rs. 500/- a month. However, in old-age, medical expenses rise and dependency on children / relatives increases for physical, mental and economic support.

Thus, in case of India, the problem of aged people above sixty or more is neither too high nor it poses any substantial economic challenge, but it is quite a demanding task on the part of the policy makers and officials to make proper planning toward the welfare measures like medical care, resettlement, re-employment programmed, let alone the pensioner benefits. Again, a dividing line of superiority-inferiority quotient exists between male and female genders in India due to long socio-cultural and historical factors. The aged women face more critical situation than the men as they are not empowered by the society due to some of the reasons like low literacy rate, customary ownership of property by men and social prejudice against them.
Women participation in labor force as working class group and tertiary sectors are lower as in the prime age they are engaged in tending the family. Only in the organized sector, the picture is a little better where they are given due protection of human rights and rule of law is followed. Hence, a realistic policy formulation for the elderly people would require one to take into account the fact of gender discrimination and differentiation. A long term planning is the need of the hour whereby the populace could be sensitized through education the need of women empowerment, shrinking the gender discrimination and equitable distribution of welfare measures toward making a balance and developing human resource. Any realistic gender component that includes all the typical problems and complexities needs a thorough research and open debates. A viable policy could be framed only when such researches on the various facets of elderly people taking into consideration their age, retirement, socio-economic back ground, education, affiliation and so forth is undertaken on national and regional levels. The present work is geared toward that direction to formulate scientific data on the various aspects of ageing among the retired people.

**Subjective well-being**

The concept of subjective well-being has ever been a matter of intense debate and it has always cogitated the minds of great thinkers all over the world ever since the inception of human civilization. Still it is difficult to define it comprehensively as to what constitutes good life. It varies from individual to individual as some people think material wealth is the source of happiness where as for others, it is renunciation. In fact, the Weser and the Eastern cultures are markedly different on the issue of subjective well-being as the former has always gone for how much more it can have and the later struggled for the least requirement of life. Naturally, the dichotomy is science versus religion or more precisely, it is materialism versus spiritualism. The result is that the West has developed the empirical science and the East has excelled in spirituality. Thus, the overall culture influences the mass into grasping the philosophy of subjective well-being on the average. That’s why the count on subjective well-being may be subjected to external or internal factors like sense-pleasure, human relationship, love-needs, material gain or renunciation leading to spiritual upliftment.
Stock et al in their scholarly work defined happiness as: "The degree to which an individual judges the overall quality of his life as-a-whole favorably (Veenhoven: 1984). Further, it is clarified that:"Subjective well-being is an abstract, super ordinate construct entailing the affective reactions of individuals along a positive-negative continuum to their life experiences" (Stock, Okun, & Benin: 1986). The evaluation of subjective well-being has its roots in the cognitive process in any individual which is inherited by birth and enriched by environment. Thus, life satisfaction issuing from cognitive judgments and the play of moods and emotions issuing from affective evaluations are both considered for the study of SWB. Generally, people are said to have high SWB if they are satisfied with the circumstances of life that includes both the achieved and ascribed status. Literally the term happiness is used in place of its psychological terminology as SWB and people with frequent positive emotions are said to be happier than those experience more of negative emotions.

Of late, the scientific study of subjective well-being since past two decades has shown increasing interest in studying the negative emotions for the measure of SWB. So, radical behaviorism of earlier decades as study of SWB has modified itself toward more comprehensive results. Psychological articles researching on negative states for the measure of SWB outnumber those examining positive states by a ratio of 17 to 1 (Myers & Diener : 1995). Researchers working on subjective well-being attempt to explore the full range of psychological factors involved as to the varied perspectives of happiness that specifically include the factors that one can shun away from depression thus, making one lead a better life with utmost satisfaction. This trend is welcome from all quarters as the very purpose of life is to live a worthy life and any work that could add to the value of life leading one and all to more and more happiness quotient is certainly like adding new feathers to the crown of human pursuit of well being. Hence, endeavor is made to understanding and studying the processes which underlie happiness. Peoples’ aspirations, long and short term goals, personality traits, efforts of adaptability and powers of coping with adversity are studied threadbare. Certain factors like personality traits, aspirations, resources and opportunities always interact upon a person toward making one happy or unhappy. Our wants and resources to fulfill those wants keep changing from time to time, yet they play major role in SWB of any person. On the other hand, external demographic factors such as income, health, and social contacts etc. also change across the life span, but according to Diener et al. only little do they impact upon the subjective well-being of a
person (Diener and Suh : 1998). Diener’s study reveals that from the age group of 40 to 90, average income and percent of people who are married drop steadily, yet mean levels of life satisfaction remain stable across age groups. The post modern and post colonial age of late 20th and 21st century has begun to question the realism, essentialism and foundationalism in which nothing stands essential or none is final and in such scenario it is very difficult to find any stable elements that could make one happy. In other words, the very question as to what constitutes good life is in serious question.

Well-being is a subjective matter as the western people give more importance to material gain as a matter of well being, whereas Indian value system puts more emphasis on renunciation as a means of well-being. Throughout history, philosophers and religious leaders have suggested that diverse characteristics, such as love, wisdom, and nonattachment, are the cardinal elements of a fulfilled existence.

Utilitarian theorists such as Jeremy Bentham, however, argued that the presence of pleasure and the absence of pain are the defining characteristics of a good life (1789/1948). Thus, the proponents of Utilitarianism were the intellectual forerunners of subjective well-being researchers, focusing on the emotional, mental, and physical pleasures and pain that an average individual experience. Although there are other desirable personal characteristics beyond whether a person is happy, the individual with abundant joy has key ingredient of a good life.

Empirical studies of subjective well-being began early in the 20th century. As early as 1925, Flugel studied moods by having people recorded their emotional events and then summing emotional reactions across moments. Flugel’s work of on–line sampling approaches to measuring subjective well-being was the pioneering effort of modern day studies as people tended to access more on-line solutions to their everyday problems.

Survey researchers in post World War II scenario began polling people as to how average people feel about happiness and life satisfaction by using sample global survey questionnaires. People for the study were chosen from a panorama of groups and files representing a plethora of nations of the world. Two prominent scholars on this issue: one, George Gerald Guerin and the other, Hadley Cantril pioneered the use of large-scale surveys as “How happy are you?” with options for simple responses varying from “very happy” to “not very happy”. Diener (2000) proposed that a national index should be created in which subjective well-being could be tracked over a long period of time. This would facilitate grouping of people with similar affects that
make them happy or unhappy. Further, it can help easy diagnosis and possible psychological solutions. Compared to this modern method of sample survey, the earlier study using short scales of survey does not fall short as it also has opened many new psychological insights into the problem of subjective-wellbeing. In 1969, for example, Norman Bradburn found that pleasant and unpleasant affect are somewhat independent and have different correlations upon different people. Thus, the two affects must be studied independently to gain a complete picture of individuals’ well-being. This finding has some of the far reaching implications in the field of subjective well-being such as: (a) It has shown that clinical psychology’s attempts of fostering positive states in a person does not mean that it can eliminate the negative states from the mind. (b) Even though pleasure and pain are diametrically opposite, yet the elimination of one may not result in a corresponding increase of the other. (c) It is not easy and simple to eliminate the negative states of mind from a person’s psychological settings. Nor is it so simple that by eliminating sadness and anxiety the world could be made a place of happiness. Such view would be to support the utopianism. In this regard, Wilson in 1962 reviewed only a meager amount of research on “avowed happiness”; where as in the eighties decade, Diener provided a much larger database on subjective well-being through intensive research through survey techniques upon a large groups of people across nations. His database is a step ahead of the data so far collected till eighty’s decade and the field began to be more scientific than before. Diener’s work is a landmark in the field of SWB as it stimulated a number of works that studied the impact of different affects on different people and some of them are: Argyle : 1987; Myers : 1982; Strack, Argyle & Schwarz : 1991. Again Diener, Suh, Lucas and Smith in 1999 authored a new review of SWB in the Psychological Bulletin. Two prominent works are worth the mention here that has provided more thorough reviews on subjective well-being: A handbook volume of chapters related to hedonic psychology (Kahneman, Diener & Schwarz : 1999) and a book dedicated to cross cultural difference in subjective well-being (Diener & Suh : 2000).

Thus, subjective well-being as the scientific discipline witnessed a rapid growth. One of the reasons for the impetus is that in post materialistic world the number of unhappy people grew rapidly. People normally seek basic needs of life and any absence of that naturally makes them unhappy. The West has had enough material wealth, health care systems, luxuries of life and welfare measures beyond the basic minimum needs, yet there is unhappiness galore. Certainly, the measure of life-satisfaction and quality-life has taken a leap beyond the measure of material
well-being. Subjective well-being as a branch of study and possible solutions against all unhappiness has been quite popular than before as it draws attention to so many people suffering from various psychological imbalances since it reflects opinions in a democratic manner and in today’s world popular opinions matter a lot.

One more reason for the popularity of the subject is that the world has witnessed the invasion of information technology and with that came up the trend of more and more individualism around the globe. Individualists are concerned with their own feelings and beliefs and thus, the study of subjective well-being corresponds well with the Western zeitgeist. Finally, the field has all the justification for its popularity for it produces viable solutions to millions of people suffering from anxiety and ennui.

Determiners of Subject well-being: Determiners of Subject well-being are always in variations as people of different nations vary in their cultures and traditions and one particular determiner of happiness of one culture group may sharply be in variance with another culture group. For example, Indian tradition in general supports renunciation as a source of happiness, whereas the Western culture goes for more and more of consumerism. As a branch of behavioral science, the SWB studies various components that make people happy. It includes issues ranging from momentary moods of depression to global judgments of life satisfaction. Since at the dawn of 21st century there is a global search for happiness, the scientific studies have also increased accordingly to meet the expectations of people toward solving different problems. Scientists who study SWB in respect to aging have been quite popular as with growing age happiness tends to decline and search for the lost happiness is common psychological tendency for human beings.

Here, we look upon age trends in SWB, but our major goal is to alert researchers to the intriguing multi-faceted nature of this concept that has emerged in recent years. Wessman and Ricks (1966) conducted intensive personality work on happy people and the characteristics of a happy person. Is the happy person well-liked and balanced? However, the scientific study of happiness still generated a bit of doubt. When Wilson (1967) wrote about “avowed happiness,” his discussion hedged on whether it was real happiness that scientists were measuring, although he did not fully define the state.
With Bradburn’s study on the subject of SWB research it was first made clear that positive affect (PA) and negative affect (NA) are independent (Bradburn: 1969). Different variables, as found by Bradburn, are responsible for the cause of positive and negative emotions in a person and it lent empirical support to Jahoda’s notion of mental health.

Further, the independence of PA and NA became important to the study of happiness as it suggested that happiness is not uni-dimensional, instead it is at least two-dimensional. In other words, PA and NA are not simply polar ends of a single continuum. So the measure of it requires independent enquiry of any affect, be it PA or NA. The third cognitive component of life-satisfaction to the science of SWB was introduced by Andrews and Withey (1976) and Campbell et al. (1976) were exploring domain satisfaction as a fourth form of SWB.

In 1984, Diener reviewed the field of SWB, including the various theories and known characteristics of happy individuals at the time. Large national studies of SWB concluded that most Americans were indeed happy, regardless of age, race, sex, income, or education level (Myers and Diener: 1995). Since 1990, there has been an explosion of research in the field, with a large number of SWB studies now occurring in the area of gerontology as well. Neugarten et al. (1961), for example, developed a scale that measures life satisfaction specifically among the elderly.

A pertinent question arises as to why SWB is so important and how does it benefit one and all. Some of the reasons are already discussed in the foregoing topics and still some prominent findings are appended below:

First, high SWB leads to benefits leading to better health and perhaps even increased life span (Danner et al.: 2001). Second, people all over the world have taken SWB seriously as it matters to leading a meaningful life. In a survey of college students from 17 countries, Diener (2000) found that happiness and life satisfaction were both rated well above any other necessities of life. It was far more important than money or material pleasures in every country, even though there are variation in some cultures and traditions. The study reflects that all the respondents are seriously concerned to lead happy life. Third, for Diener et al., SWB represents a major way to assess quality of life against any economic or social indicators such as GNP, levels of health or crime (Diener and Suh: 1997). In fact, unlike other statistical measures, SWB reflects exactly the conditions of a nation in terms of its overall growth and development since it is a scientific study and free from any political motive. Thus, if SWB is studied objectively it can provide additional
information necessary to evaluate a society or nation. Fourth, SWB is frequently assessed as a major outcome variable in research on the elderly people and on other target groups (George: 1986), as it is an important indicator of quality of life in old age.

Previously, researchers were searching for the core of SWB, but it is clear that there are multiple components that combine in complex ways, and that no single one of them reflects “true happiness.” Instead, SWB must be studied as multi-faceted phenomena. People combine the basic building blocks of SWB in different ways.

**Correlates of subjective well-being:** Extensive research has been done to find the correlates of subjective well-being. It is found that the demographic and other environmental factors have correlations with happiness. These findings started with Cantril’s (1965) study of 23,875 people in 11 countries. Further, in the United State the researches by scholars like Bradburn (1969) and Campbell, Converse, and Rodgers (1976), in one hand; and on the other hand, Inglehart’s (1990) analysis of Euro-barometer studies of 16 countries with over 163,000 respondents show the same correlations. Veenhoven and colleagues (1994) later reviewed 603 such studies from 69 countries. It is concluded that demographic and environmental factors affect happiness at varying levels, but to a lesser degree than personality.

**Sex difference:** Sex difference does become an important ingredient in SWB in Western nations as individualism has gained importance over there and gender discrimination is lesser than other non-western countries. The greatest data comes from the World Value Survey (Inglehart: 1990) in which approximately 170,000 samples of different respondents from 16 nations were surveyed in which the differences in SWB between men and women were found to be negligibly small. Michalos (1991) studied 18,000 college students spanning over 30 nations and found sex difference does not count much in terms of life satisfaction and happiness. With the prominence of feminism and queer theory all over the world, the various terminologies related to gender roles have undergone linguistic changes with changing semantics. Masculinity is now called ‘agency,’ and the trait formerly called femininity, is now called ‘communion’. Communion includes the common characteristics like warmth, concern for others, sharing and caring and understanding. The term ‘agency’ now means independence, self-confidence, and decisiveness. These new terms are preferred to the old terms because they put equal value to both
the genders as both men and women can possess either trait. Curiously it is found that men do not report higher SWB than women, but both the genders with the qualities like that of an agent possess higher SWB. On the other hand, women with lower count on agency show lower SWB.

Another interesting finding within the sex and SWB literature is that women report more negative affect and depression than men and are more likely to seek therapy for these disorders. But men and women report approximately the same levels of global happiness. The reason might be that both the sexes experience similar levels of negative affect and depression. Here, only women are more concerned about NA and they seek professional help more often. Another explanation for the paradoxical sex differences in SWB is offered by Fujita, Diener, and Sandvik (1991) which suggests that in the social role of nurturer, women are socialized to be more open to emotional experiences, including both positive and negative emotions, in turn, they may experience more positive and more negative effect. Their research revealed that women report greater amounts of positive affect as well. Thus, it might be possible that women on an average experience both positive and negative emotions more strongly and frequently than men. These researchers also discovered that gender was responsible for less than 1% of the variance in happiness but the variations of the intensity of emotional experiences counted more than 13% for SWB. Fujita et al. hypothesized that average women are subjected to various bad events and wrong experiences of life and their openness to intense emotional experiences was responsible for more vulnerability and depression. It can also create opportunities for intense levels of happiness as and when the bad events are overcome giving way to more happy moments in life.

**Age:** Life satisfaction and age has direct relations as normally with age it is supposed that people get dissatisfied. Generation gap is certainly a factor that makes the older people misfit to the current generation and the society at large. The other view given by Campbell (1981) states that: “the literary image of the crotchety old person, dissatisfied with everything, is not a very realistic picture of older people” (p: 203). This optimistic view has its own justification as Bass in his study on age as a determiner for SWB found that in many a case “older people are staying involved in more life domains compared to past generations” (Bass: 1995). They also keep good health and energy to discharge their responsibilities to society. Recent studies on the subject has proved that “life satisfaction often increases, or at least does not drop with age (Herzog & Rodgers : 1981; Horley & Lavery : 1995; Larson : 1978; Stock, Okun, Haring, & Witter : 1983).
International studies of representative samples from multiple countries also indicate that life satisfaction does not decline with age (Butt & Beiser: 1987; Inglehart: 1990, Veenhoven: 1984). In post 80s decade, Diener et al. has a better observation in this as they surveyed 60,000 adults from 40 nations and found a slight upward trend in life satisfaction from the 20s to the 80s in age, and negative affects has little to do with respect to the experience. In other words, NA does lead one to unhappy state of mind with the increase of age. Of course the positive affects tend to decline with increasing age as people decline in physical strength and an ability to assert one into fulfilling anything one desires. On the other hand, Okma and Veenhoven (1996) similarly found little evidence of a decrease in life satisfaction with increasing age but they observed that mood of the older people slides to a downward graph. But that age is not a determiner in life-satisfaction could be valid only under the impact of certain specific arousal states. For example, if the impact of lower arousal states such as contentment and affection are studied upon older people rather than the impact of standard higher arousal states of ‘energetic’ and ‘feeling on top of the world’, then older people are not unhappy in any way. Diener also supported this view that positive affects does not decline with age (Diener, Sandvik, & Larsen: 1985). However, from these observations it is obvious that the emotional intensity declines with age. If life satisfaction does not decrease with increasing age, certainly it is the indicator that there is an inherent potential in every human beings to adapt to changing circumstances. Mention may be made here of the theory of evolution that states that the fittest only survive through the struggle for existence. The struggle is not only in terms of physical existence in physical settings, it also relates to the existence in spiritual settings. In other terms, the older people individually represent a repertoire of accumulated struggles of life that kept adding an ability to adapt to the conditions toward fitness to survive. Hence, in older age they nurture more varied perceptions of life and domain satisfaction what the poet Robert Browning stated that: ‘Grow old with me and the best is yet to be’. It is a fact of life that income and certain level of gratifications of life declines with age, yet the satisfaction level remains more or less stable. Some scholars have suggested that these findings serve as evidence that people earn a power to readjust themselves in society in terms of their aspirations and goals as they grow older (Campbell et al.: 1976; Rapkin & Fischer: 1992). This line of thinking stimulated another researcher, Ryff into observing in his study that older people demonstrate a closer relationship between ideal life and its actual self-perceptions than the younger people. Brandtstadter and Renner (1990) also observed that older people could
overcome adversities of life either by changing life circumstances to personal preferences (assimilative coping) or by adjusting personal preferences and goals to given situational constraints (accommodative coping). Both the types of coping can enhance life satisfaction, but the trend is that older people tend to shift from the assimilative to the accommodative style with increasing age. This supports Campbell’s conclusion that one’s goals become closure to one’s circumstances with increasing age. In cases where life satisfaction declines with age, people fail to re-adjust their lives with changing circumstances. Sometimes expectations become a potential barrier between SWB and life circumstances.

**Education:** Education has a direct role in shaping one’s personality even though it might not affect one’s SWB to a great extent as was observed by Campbell et al: 1976; Cantril: 1965; Diener et al.: 1993). In a meta-analysis of the literature, Witter, Okun, Stock, and Haring (1984) studied a median affect size of 0.13. This affect size was similar to education’s influence upon life satisfaction (0.15), morale (0.15), and quality of life (0.12). Education significantly impacts well-being for people with lower incomes (Campbell: 1981; Diener et al.: 1993). Veenhoven (1994) observed that it was a powerful tool in empowering people of poor and underdeveloped countries and thus it had significant relations with SWB. People with higher income are not affected in SWB by education due to wider opportunities of life that paves access to adequate resources to make life happy. On the other hand, in poor countries, education creates higher opportunities for employment and enables greater access to resources. A social status is also indicated by education.

The effect of education on SWB has become weaker over time in the United States. Campbell (1981) noted that in 1957, 44% of college graduates reported being very happy compared to 23% of those who were not even high school passed. A few years back the gap was lesser as the study in 1978, reflects that the corresponding percentages were 33 and 28. Thus, with changing times education is becoming more important in making one happy. Much of the relation between education and SWB results from the correlation of education with employment, income and social status (Campbell: 1981; Witter et al.: 1984). Thus, conclusion may be drawn that developed countries like America, education is only indirectly related to well-being and it has a direct relationship in poorer countries. Education is a potential player in fulfilling the expectations that makes for higher SWB, or else a gap is likely to remain.
**Income:** Diener et al. in their study on income as a determiner of SWB in a nationally representative sample in the United States observed that a small but significant correlation of 12 exists between income and SWB on the average (Diener et al: 1993). The effects of income on happiness are not very high even when examining extremely wealthy individuals. Individuals with a net worth over $125 million were compared to randomly selected people with not so rich from the same geographical areas. Results show that very rich people on an average are somewhat happier than the mean of national samples, but there is considerable overlap in the distributions of the wealthy and not wealthy groups (Diener, Hurwitz, and Emmons: 1985). Generally, wealthier people are happier than poorer people, even though the effects of income on SWB are small. Brickman et al. (1978) determined that lottery winners were happier than controls, yet it was also not much significant. Smith and Razzell (1975) studied individuals who won large amounts of money in the British football pools and found that 39% of them reported very happy compared to 19% of the controls. In some cases, unexpected results are also observed when negative affects impact on minds of those lottery winners who relinquish their jobs or encounter bitter relationship with their close ones. Lost ties with friends and relatives coupled with unemployment create a mental vacuum with decreased feelings of accomplishment. Tensions also affect them as they fail to live up to others expectations. Diener et al. (1993) found no differences in hedonic level (pleasant versus unpleasant affect) between groups advancing or declining at least one-half a standard deviation in income over a 10 years period. Change of income or its variations at individual and the national level does not have any bearing on the SWB of a person. The developed countries like France, Japan, and the United States made steady progress in economy and national income from 1946-1990, yet there was no increase in mean reports of SWB (Diener & Suh: 1997). Disposable income in those countries rose rapidly and the rate of inflation and taxes were controlled well but it did not enhance the levels of well-being of the masses. Oswald (1997) also found similar results of little increase in SWB of the people after having studied nine European nations during a time of rapid economic growth. Thus, per capita Gross National Product (GNP) correlated approximately 0.50 with life satisfaction across 39 nations. These results were supported by a sample of 55 nations using both GNP and purchasing power as indicators of national financial status (Diener: 1995). There is no direct relationship between national income and SWB, yet it has its own impact indirectly as economic prosperity
of a nation gives more freedom and rights. People receive more democratic and egalitarian treatment which in turn help increase the SWB.

Richins & Dawson (1992) while examining the effect of materialistic goals upon SWB found that people who hold money as more valuable than other aspects of life like human qualities or higher education are not much satisfied with their standard of living and with their lives. On the contrary, not so wealthy or the middle class people are happier as other factors have meaning to them and in turn those factors help maintain their mental poise and happiness. Works have been done on the impact of money on SWB and several theories have attempted to explain why materialism has an adverse impact on SWB. Materialistic pursuits normally inculcate one into more consumerist behavior and utilitarian in attitude which limits one from the path of self-actualization goals (Scitovsky: 1976). Kasser has argued that “the extrinsic goal of money is not conducive to meeting inherent needs in economically advanced societies” (Kasser: 1997). Thus, it is found that all the works so far done do not support that income or economic prosperity has much bearing on SWB, even though it impacts indirectly to some extent. Rich or moneyed people are only somewhat happier than poor people in rich nations, changes in income has marginal effect on happiness where as it is noteworthy that rich nations are better off in happiness count than poor nations. Two factors have been studied, namely expectations and material desires, to arrive at this conclusion that wealth affects SWB only for the poorer nations like Indian and African nations where the basic amenities are still in short and people are still struggling for two square meals. Hunger, malnutrition, social evils, drug-use, women-trafficking, social unrest and so forth are everyday news to these nations. Naturally, meeting the necessities of life would mean higher SWB. But for developed nations, these problems are far too less than the developing nations, hence, the least impact on happiness. However, even in poor countries, the impact is not so much considerable as some of the Indian nations like Bangladesh have poor income, yet people are much happier than other nations with higher income within the subcontinent. Interpretation of these findings leads one to question the use of so much of wealth both at individual and national level. The policy-makers should rise to the occasion to the fact that policies are not to be meant for generating more money, rather it’s to be done for proper utilization keeping in mind the egalitarian distribution and welfare of one and all. All over the world it is observed that some people run after more and more money by undertaking over time works or by pursuing other business beyond the office hours while sacrificing the time needed
for worship, self-growth, meditation, yoga exercises, leisure, meeting people and friends and other mental recreations necessary for overall growth and mental peace. They earn more money, but certainly not more happiness as the finding goes so far through scholarly works all over the world. Hence, the solution is not the pursuit of wealth and economic growth, but its proper use for all, creating value in other metaphysical pursuits like yoga, spirituality, caring for all human beings through equitable distribution, and creating more accommodative policies that can foster the spirit of toleration.

**Marriage:** Marriage has been one of the primary institutions all over the world through which the society perpetuates in most civic manner and its impact on happiness is considerably higher. The same has been the case in America where marriage has brought much happiness to people and it continues consistently (Glenn: 1975; Gove & Shin: 1989). Some of the prominent woks are illustrated here to justify the point. Similar works as that of Glenn are done in other countries as well. For example, White in Canada (1992), Mastekaasa in Norway (1995), and Diener at international level have proved the same (Diener, Gohm, Suh, & Oishi: 1998). These large-scale surveys show that married people report greater happiness compared to those who were never married or are divorced, separated, or widowed. Those who co-habit with a partner and are not married are significantly happier in some cultures than those living alone (Kurdek: 1991; Mastekaasa: 1995). Marriage and well-being correlate significantly even when age and income are controlled (Glenn & Weaver: 1979; Gove, Hughes, & Style: 1983).

An average correlation between marital status and SWB is 0.14 as it was observed in a meta-analysis conducted by Haring-Hidore, Stock, Okun, and Witter (1985). Another study (1991) was conducted by Lee, Sercombe, & Shehan on the impact of marriage on men and women from 1972-89. They included sample responses of both married and unmarried men and women and found that both married men and women were happier consistently than unmarried men and women. Diener et al. added another dimension of impact of emotion on marriage through their scholarly work in 1998 which stated that though life satisfaction of both married man and women remained more or less stable, impact of emotional satisfaction became higher to a married man than a married woman.
The similar observations are found in other potential works as well which states that marriage brings in positive change in life for both man and women as both could support each other in times of adverse situations of life like economic hardships or lack of emotional balance (Coombs: 1991; Gove, Style, & Hughes: 1990; Kessler & Essex: 1982). Headey, Veenhoven, and Wearing found in a longitudinal study (1991) that among the six life domains like job, health etc. only marital satisfaction had a significant causal influence on global life satisfaction.

Life satisfaction is quality life one lives through marital union which again largely depends on quality choice and compatibility of the partners. Certainly, compatibility brings in greater warmth of relationship giving rise to higher emotional satisfaction. Mastekaasa observed through his study in 1995 that selection of partners is crucial as a mismatch could jeopardize life, where as a right choice could raise the value of SWB. Here, certain variables like the structure of interactions (Gottman & Levenson : 1986), emotional expressiveness (King : 1993), and role sharing (Hendrix : 1997) are related to satisfactory marital life and SWB.

**Job satisfaction**: It is already observed that income some what makes up meaning for poorer nations and for rich nations it is marginal. A meta-analysis of 34 studies has been done by Tait, Padgett, and Baldwin (1989) determined an average correlation of 0.44 between job satisfaction and life satisfaction. In post World War scenario and with increasing impact of globalization societies all over the world are changing toward growth and development. The demands of increasing production have opened up greater opportunity for women to be part of the work force.

Economic independence for women through career-choice has given more life satisfaction. Especially, in third world countries the change is obvious as women in those countries were denied education and any role sharing. Through studies is observed that employment and life satisfaction for women are strongly related. Work is a creative process and employment outside home create more social interaction, thereby creating more pleasures of life through broad -basing ones life’s domain. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) and Scitovsky (1976) have found the same integral relationship between employment and SWB as it offers an optimal level of stimulation that people find pleasurable, positive social relationships, and a sense of identity and meaning. The impact of job satisfaction on well being is undeniable as Bretz & Judge (1994)
observed that a person fits into an organisation through job satisfaction and it also ensures both individual and organisational growth.

Similarly, Mottaz (1985) found that intrinsic rewards and social benefits are significant predictors of satisfaction. Life satisfaction and job satisfaction are mutually related as was observed by Sones & Kozma (1986) that “People satisfied with their lives generally find more satisfaction in their work”, which further reveals that the relation between job and life satisfaction may reflect internal personality factors. Unemployed people, on the other hand have higher distress, lower life satisfaction, and higher rates of suicide than employed individuals (Oswald: 1997; Platt & Kreitman: 1985). Unemployment typically causes lower SWB (Clark: 1998).

Health: One of the key characteristics of good life is good health as the proverb goes well that health is wealth. Health as one of the important factors of the heterogeneous phenomena of SWB is studied by scholars from diverse angels. Campbell et al. (1976) found respondents to judge “good health” as the most important of various life domains. Watten, Vassend, Myhrer, & Syversen observed through their study in 1997 that self-reported health measures and objective health ratings by physicians have differed always as certain psychological complexities affecting health might not be reflected as any health disorder, and hence for a physician what is apparently a healthy condition might be otherwise for an individual, for emotion and health are closely related. So, what one feels about one’s health is more important than objective health count while evaluating their impact on SWB.

This curious phenomenon may be explained in other terms as sometimes people do not count their poor health when evaluating their global life satisfaction. Adaptability is a natural quality in all creatures and so happens with human beings. They tend to cope with any minor health disorder through controlling of mind when situations so necessitates. It is also necessitates to pose one as healthy in a social circumstances even though one is not. However, Mehnert et al. (1990) have found that people with severe disabling condition or multiple or chronic problems display low SWB, and if the condition is tolerable or less severe, they try to cope cognitively. Above all, poor health is thought to impact negatively on SWB as it interferes with goal-attainment.
Religion: Religious practice does just not believe in any belief system, rather it is being and becoming. It has positive effect on the well-being of individuals, families, and the community. Regular attendance at religious services is linked to healthy, stable family life, strong marriages, and well-behaved children. The practice of religion is also related to ontological quest. The term ontology is taken from the Greek word ‘onto’ means, being; that which is and ‘logia’ means, philosophical being, existence, or reality as such. Ontology as a philosophical concept is a branch of metaphysics which is concerned with the study of being. Religion also inculcates a pantheistic belief to attaining the mythic powers of perception for uniting the trinity of head, heart, and soul so that the whole man is born, who alone could be capable of right faculty of judgment and could avoid any distortions common to limited beings.

Such a state enlivens the mind with higher SWB counts. The practice of religion also lessens the incidence of crime, addiction, and other social evils. For Marx, religion is the “opiate of the masses” which means it helps the mass in reducing stress and in turns, it promotes SWB. Broad based studies on national level corroborate the same fact. For example, Ellison in 1991 found that SWB correlates significantly with religious certainty, even though the affect sizes are not large. For Pollner (1989), SWB becomes higher when one establishes one’s relationship with the Divine what has an echo of the Vedic scriptures that the highest bliss is realised by the union of the human soul with the divine soul.

Other findings say that prayer experiences promote higher SWB (Poloma & Pendleton: 1991) and devotional and participatory aspects of religiosity (Ellison, Gay, & glass: 1989), even after controlling for age, income and marital status. Numerous studies have been conducted since Durkheim on religious impact on SWB and all the studies have found the same result that religion has engaging and ennobling experience of life satisfaction. Some of the examples are mentioned here. In a crisis situation, when a human being finds no alternative to the immanent problem, s/he resorts to god and according to Pollner’s (1989) finding religious experiences offer a sense of meaning not only in daily life, but also during major life crises. Other aspect of religion as found by Taylor et al. is that it offers social fulfillment through exposure to social networks composed of people who share similar attitudes and values (Taylor & Chatters: 1988).

Thus, the regular goers of church or regular member of it are those who have lost other forms of social support. The retired people, widows, widowers or solitary people normally find social support in religion and its practices as it lends solidarity of purposes among all. Ellison
(1991) concluded that religious variables account for approximately 5%-7% of life satisfaction variance, but only 2%-3% of the variance is in affective well-being. Ellison suggests that religion serves as a smoothening agent against any adverse or odd experience of life. It’s a cognitive process of changing one’s attitude to life and goal attainment rather than eliminating any negative experiences as religious bent of mind teaches one for self-abnegation and renunciation so much that it makes sense of a fulfilled or accomplished life, though not without varying degree.

Strawbridge, Shema, Cohen, Roberts, and Kaplan (1998) have concluded through their studies that religiosity immunes one from the ill effects of dreary intercourse of life, rash judgment stress, foul tongue or depression, but it might invite other problems as the spouse might be unhappy as both of them might be rooted to two different worlds, namely material and spiritual. Hence, even religious practices have its own shortcomings on SWB, indirectly though and it still needs proper research as to how it could be inevitably positive.

**Leisure:** In surveys reviewed by Veenhoven and colleagues (1994), happiness was correlated with leisure satisfaction and levels of leisure activities at 40. But taking various demographic variables in consideration including employment and social class, the correlation fell to 20. The correlation was greatest for those not working such as the unemployed, retired, or old, those of greater wealth or social class, and the married without children at home (Zuma: 1989). Longitudinal studies have attempted to find causal effects of leisure on happiness. Glancy, Willits, and Farrell (1986) studied 1521 high school students for 24 years and having applied a number of controls, they have found that those who have had leisure in the adolescent period of life can have better life satisfaction in the adulthood or later stages of life.

A similar study was conducted in Australia by Heady, Holmstrom, and Wearing (1985) taking samples of 600 Australians at two-year intervals and they concluded that leisure satisfaction increased subjective well-being. Leisure in its various forms offers well being of a person with varying intensity. For example, sports as a form of Leisure pursuit offer strong effect of SWB. Similarly, Exercise, such as aerobics for 8 to 10 weeks, two to four times a week, generally increase happiness while reducing clinical depression and anxiety in a person (Biddle and Mutrie: 1991). Further, sports and games or exercises help controlling the negative effects on heart rate and blood pressure.
Thus, it has the potential to relieve much of the day to day stress one encounters in life (Kimbell and Basford: 1996). The release of endorphins and other hormones interact with the receptors in human brain to reduce the perception of pain. Regular exercise lets the hormone produce in brain, spinal cord, and some other parts of the body. It is released in response to brain chemicals called neurotransmitters. Leisure in the form of regular physical exercises improves the SWB in so far that it adds higher self-esteem, reduce anxiety and feelings of depression, and improve sleep. Argyle (1996) in his study found that dance and music are quite effective in SWB as they induce good mood in a person which further helps him/her make better social contacts and satisfaction.

Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi (1988) observed that the greatest satisfaction is derived from activities in which one has to display skills and competence to meet the challenges involved in any activity. Hence, leisure may be best utilized when one can make use of it through meeting challenges, using skills, and attaining certain goals. Unfortunately, the present day world has gone for maximum TV watching as the form of leisure which ultimately does not make one happier than those who do not watch so much. It is found that this activity, however, does provide positive and relaxing pleasure at a very low level of arousal - at a point between being awake and asleep (Kubey and Csikszentmihalyi: 1990). Holidays are a source of happiness and relaxation. Rubenstein (1980) surveyed a large number of Psychology Today readers and found that 21% of them had headaches when not on holiday whereas, only 3% of them reported such symptoms during vacation. Tedious work schedule normally increase symptoms like irritability, anxiety, constipation etc.

**Life events:** Research has shown that major life events influence SWB with short and long term impacts. The personality is shaped by life events as eventful life has greater chance of adding flavour to life through varies experiences. It enlarges one’s horizon as well. Kenner et al (1981) found that the frequency of daily positive events correlates with positive affect at 0.33. Another study has found that the percentage of time when subjects were experiencing positive affect correlated with happiness at approximately 0.50, and average intensity of positive affect when subjects were feeling happy correlated with happiness at about 0.25 (Diener, Sandvik, and Pavot: 1991).
Researchers on the influence of life events suggest that intense positive experiences do not have much effect on happiness as it happens in one’s life not too frequently. Normally, it amounts to 2.6 percent of happiness count in one’s life. The main causes of joy in a study of five European countries were: relationships with friends; the basic pleasures of food, drink, and sex; and success experiences (Scherer et al.: 1986). Companionship has higher effect of happiness as it was found by Larson (1990) that people experience more positive mood in the company of friends than their state of being alone. Happiness correlates in proportion with the number of friends, frequency of meeting them, celebrating festivals and parties, and membership certain professional and amateur clubs.

Headey, Holmstrom, and Wearing (1985) discovered that favorable events within the realms of friendship and work predictably increase in SWB over two-year intervals. On the one hand, frequency of sexual intercourse correlates with happiness as being in love and frequency of interaction with spouse adds to life satisfaction while adding gratification to sensual pleasures and on the other hand, indiscriminate sexual attitudes have a negative relationship. Nature always attracts human beings positively and scenic beauty including vast green pastures, the sea, and beaches with amusement facilities, the sun rise and sun set from mountains or sea shore, snow clad mountains, and a variety of flora and fauna also produce positive effects. Falling in love is rated highest and the effects are positive as long as the love lasts. Even though there is no broad consensus on the relation between having children and SWB, yet it has positive impact on happiness. It might be stressful for some people and some time as in Indian sub continent still a girl child is unwelcome in any quarters.

A child is also unwelcome when a family runs through adverse economic situation or in time of natural calamities. Some of the events occur once in a blue moon like winning a lottery which offers immediate happiness but the level of happiness lessens considerably in due course of time. Such events have complex effects upon SWB because they promote sudden economic and social changes in one’s life with positive effect, yet a wrong choice might be quite the opposite. Peak experiences have been known to occur through religion, music, and other intense activities.

**Competencies:** Through studies positive correlations have been deduced between the competency of intelligence and happiness. Competence of a person is directly related to
intelligence and some of the personality traits and as education creates more opportunities; competence also makes one more endearing to others. Both these factors let one achieve higher goals in life. Of course, both the factors of physical and mental competencies are valued in most of the societies. Agnew has argued that physical attractiveness has a stronger effect, especially for young women as it produces popularity with the opposite sex, teachers and employers, and it is a source of upward mobility in society (Agnew: 1984).

It is observed quite often now a day that women beauty contests in all the nations or at the international levels like Miss Universe or Miss World competitions consider both the factors of physical and mental competencies. Women with higher competencies are more valued and accepted what makes them happier than those who are not so fortunate in beauty. For men, height and good health have similar effects and has a small correlation with happiness. Social-skills are much more important than the preceding competencies. Argyle and Lu (1990) found that extroverts have more social-skills coupled with good assertiveness skills which are responsible for their happiness.

Social-skills lead to happiness because they improve the probability of attaining desired relationships with others. All the professionals with higher social skills and emotional intelligence fare better in their career than others. On the other hand it is also found that those who possess considerably lower competencies, especially EI (emotional intelligence), are socially rejected. They tend to be more isolated and unhappy as they do not receive good companionship, appreciations, or social support (Sarason and Sarason: 1985). Studies have also found that happiness is related to cooperativeness, leadership, and heterosexual skills (Argyle, Martin and Lu: 1995).

**Aging and Subjective well-being**

Studies conducted by economists suggested that the relationship between subjective well-being and age is curved. Almost every study results that happiness is U-shaped in age, with a minimum point in a range from the mid-30s to approximately the late-40s. The result has now been demonstrated for perhaps fifty nations. It has been found especially in data from Western countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, France, Italy, Belgium,

Blanchflower (2001) documents the U-shape in 23 East European transition nations. Di Tella et al (2003) provide the same for 12 separate Western industrial nations. Clark et al (1996) makes a similar argument for job satisfaction equations, and also gives some results for mental well-being equations. Recently, Blanchflower and Oswald (2006), using data on approximately half a million Europeans and Americans, argues that allowance for the inclusion of cohort effects makes little difference to the finding of a U-shape.

**Death Anxiety**

The concept of death anxiety reveals an individual’s abnormal fear of dying. An individual suffering from the morbid is more likely to be afraid and anxious or unable to function when he/ she talks, reads, watches or experiences anything related with dying. In other words death anxiety increases the fear of one's own death or the process of his/her dying. Janet Belsky (1999) defined “death anxiety as “the thoughts, fears, and emotions about that final event of living that we experience under more normal conditions of life”

Birth, copulations and death are three natural processes of all living creatures that move in a cyclic process of what the last one is still a riddle for all human beings. Though death is inevitable, yet none wants to die and hence, at old age people become more anxious of it. The term ‘death anxiety’ is normally conceptualized as the apprehension generated by death awareness (Abdel-Khalek: 2005). John Becker (1973) while working on as a critic attempted to illuminate on the issue as he found that quite a good many works have focused as to human predicament while challenging death. Humans are unique in that they must learn to live and adapt to the consciousness of their own finiteness Thus, a major task for cultural systems is to provide a symbolic structure that addresses death and provides meaning for its occurrence and a context for its transcendence (Becker: 1973; Kübler-Ross: 2002).
Confronting death and the anxiety generated by knowledge of its inevitability is a universal psychological conundrum for all human beings. Medical science has ever endeavored to treat all the diseases and improve the life span of all the living creatures, but for all of the health care providers, death is an ever-present reality. That death is inevitable does not mean that one should sit idle or accept it passively. Omni potent nature in the form of death will have its say, yet human beings as natural creature will also have to do its natural duty to sustain in this world as long as possible as by living good life only we can make the world worth living with greater life-satisfaction. Christianity in this regard always laid faith in death and redemption and Christ has entreated people of the West to be a Good Samaritan. So, helping individuals and their families in managing death is a central responsibility of medicos all over the world. An increasing literature suggests that death anxiety contributes to important emotional and behavioral outcomes.

Theoretical and empirical background of the concept has not been systematically examined in medical science. There is still a dearth of literatures that has explored death anxiety as an important variable in empirical nursing inquiry. Many a cases the existential dilemma occurs due to absence of proper care and treatment to incurable diseases. Patients suffer excruciating pain and succumb to it prematurely. Of late euthanasia has been approved as a relief against the anxiety in many European countries, but still a sustained work is imperative to help people cope with this profound existential issue.

A struggle to remain forever against this inevitability goes on consciously or subconsciously in every human being which metamorphose into creative potentials. Majority of the philosophical inquiries is centered to this phenomenon. Death has been conceptualized differently by different poets and philosophers throughout the ages. Death anxiety has been vividly expressed by some of the greatest writers of the world of whom the latest William Golding, the 1983 Nobel laureate, has shown the Pincher Martin’s character challenging his death even after he died. Martin, who blames God for his wretchedness, is an embodiment of his unquenchable thirst for more; even he defies God, and misery came inevitably to him who long after his death as torpedoed dead sailor of the 2nd World War continues to hold on to his ego as if he is surviving. He was, in fact alive through his ego issuing from death anxiety in nonsense plane (Golding: 1956).
Similarly, Leo Tolstoy, well-known 19th-century Russian moral thinker and novelist, aptly illustrated the human challenges against the inevitability of death. In *The Death of Ivan Ilych*, he shows the anxiety of death in the last three days of Ivan Ilych’s egocentric, seemingly meaningless existence. Death came to him as a metaphorical private black sack what he abhorred to accept, but his struggle against death only heightened his suffering. Ultimately, death, the inevitable, engulfed him by an imperceptible, subtle power (Tolstoy: 1960).

In 21st century, information technology has enhanced the awareness of SWB among ordinary people and exposure to better medical care has enabled people to raise the life expectancy. Nursing is geared to fulfilling the needs and aspirations of suffering people and to date, efforts are directed toward bettering life to reduce the death anxiety.

Nyantanga and de Vocht argue that a clear and comprehensive theoretical definition of the death anxiety concept that integrates the divergent theoretical approaches is not found in the nursing literature despite its critical relevance to palliative care practice and research (Nyatanga & de Vocht: 2006).

Thus death anxiety as an important determiner of SWB is being considered seriously for psychiatric care, community cancer centers, acute and trauma care, chronic care, and pediatrics and in individuals facing diagnosis of a life-threatening illness. The goal is to bring pragmatic change in the application of nursing science on the basis of standard practices of the past and the present.

**Death and the Seasons of life:** The apprehension of death and its consequent anxiety make people think inward which make people wiser in older age than in the younger age. Erikson (1982) holds that wisdom is a detached perspective of life and it is induced in human beings when one comes closer to death in ripe old age. Jung in his famous essay has elucidated the aspects of death and SWB comprehensively. Death awareness is well regulated in a person’s life as unlike older people, younger people are not much concerned with it, nor should one be. Like Shakespearean seven stages of life of any person in which every stage demands certain role and one has to undergo the process for fulfilling the obligations; Jung also suggests that a young person should be focused for making a good career so as to fulfill the demands of life appropriate to that stage. One should inculcate a well-socialized ego, raise family and secure a place for himself or herself in the adult world (Jung: 1933). There is no need to make room for death in the
psychological life of the young person. A young person must not be brooding over death anxiety or remain locked in the past or else it would be betraying the demands of life, rather one should strive for excellence to reach to the zenith of life-satisfaction.

Jung as an empiricist held that a few decades of life span bestowed by nature on human beings is with a definite purpose of making the most of life. This is the time when a person can re-invent himself or herself with a new sense of freedom and with greater individuality toward contributing not only for the self, but also for the society, for the soul and for spiritual growth as it is inherent human nature. It is suggested that from the middle age, a person would remain vitally alive who is ready to die with life. Since death is fulfillment of life’s meaning, old age is the opportune moment to fulfill this goal as much of the ego sinks into unconscious at this stage and our psychic energy turns inward. Libido (life energy) having turned inward gives expression to our inner world (Jung: 1934/1981, p.129).

Daniel Levinson (1978) maintained that a concern for death can be sound at every stage of life, yet he concurred that it gathers momentum in the later years. At every stage of our existence, he claimed, we are both young and old. At a deep psychological level, we continuously experience, albeit in differing form and strength, the clash between youth– The drive toward rebirth, creativity, and growth–and age–the sense of stagnation, closure, and decay. It is during adulthood, and most noticeably during the midlife transition that takes place about age 40, that this young/old polarity is experienced with unusual vehemence. It is also at this juncture that it becomes clear that this polarity finds its ultimate foundation in the clash between the wish for immortality and the inevitability of death.

Thus, Levinson followed Elliott Jacques (1965) in placing the issue of death squarely at the center of the adult era and most particularly during the middle transition. In this period, a person realizes that the youthful years are over and that old age and death are no longer a remote prospect. He comments that “At the age of forty, a man is known more deeply than ever before that he is going to die. He feels it in his bones in his dreams, in the marrow of his being. His death is not simply an abstract, hypothetical event. An unpredictable accident or illness could take his life tomorrow. Even another thirty years does not seem so long; more years now lie behind than ahead”. (Levinson: 1973, p.215)

This outlook is reinforced by the first signs of psycho-physiological decline, the illness and death of peers, and the aging of parents. Levinson (1975) argued that people have a wish for
immortality which makes it difficult to come to terms with one’s death for sure. This difficulty is compounded by the fact that after living a long life one becomes more intelligent and searches for more meaning of life. But physical decline makes one feel perturbed as no much time and energy are left to fulfill the instincts and purposes. A negative psyche circumvents the mind into thinking that as if the life is wasted and the energies are squandered away in trifle things. Now there is not enough time left to begin afresh. Such a state of philosophical enquiry normally does not pep into one’s life till one comes to the exact state of life or until one has lived the trajectories of life, but there are exceptions as levinson found them much earlier in the midst of the midlife transition.

Arguably, the outlook that most explicitly includes death is James Hillamn’s (e.g. 1975, 1979), whose "archetypal psychology" radicalizes some elements of Jung’s thought. We have found echoes of Jung, James, May, and others in Hillman’s views about death as they are stated in his Suicide and the Soul (1990). We also found a sharp opposition to fromm’s (1964) views. In Hillman’s view, life and death are inextricable and consciously linked. Hence, the encounter with death cannot be postponed to the second half of life, as Jung and others would have it.

“The moment I am born I am old enough to die, as I go on living I am dying. Death is entered continuously, not just at the moment of death as legally and medically defined. Each event in my life makes its contribution to my death and I build my death as I go along day by day” (Hillman: 1990, p.59). Since life and death are intimately related, they are understandable only in terms of each other. Moreover, he put forward that, “if only the living can die, only the dying is really alive” (p.59). That means, death anxiety is so powerful as it ushers in a new beginning in the cycle of life. Further, life and death are inextricably connected and any action that resists and opposes death mostly hurts life.

Hillman (1990) could not accept such views as it seemed to him not psychologically viable. Rather it is an Epicurean maxim that death cannot be experienced, because when one is dead, one can't feel, and when alive, one isn't dead. On the contrary, death is frequently experienced as an existential condition and a state of being in dreams and psychotic states, One experiences the process of dying by seeing and aligning him/her empathetically with the death of friends ,relatives and dear ones. At this hour one is overtaken by a sense of loss and emptiness that feels like death. When one is in the grip of the fear of dying and when one wishes the death of others, or his or her own, one psychologically could feel the pinch of death anxiety. There is
death in one's fantasies. People may confront death in many ways: "Some seem driven to death: others are hounded by it; others are drawn to it by a call from what can only be empirically described as ‘the other side’” (Hillman: 1990, p. 64-65). A longing for a dead lover, or parent, or child at their demise is experiencing death. Sometimes life seems to be meaningless in the event of the loss of the dearest ones and it is exactly a sense of dying. For some people, each separation is death, and parting in dying. There are still others who feel the life is meaning les and cursed and finding not even the prospect of bleak light into the gloom and void, they commit suicide and before ending the life they experience death in their blighted ego. Philosophers of all over the world have been unanimous that we die in our soul every day, as we die in our body. Just as body tissues die and are regenerated, thus soul is regenerated by the death experience, by dying to the illusion that death cannot reach us, and by a fresh concern with the essentials of life.

Psychosocial Aspects of Death among the Elderly: Death is an inescapable fact of life that touches everyone at some or other point of time. So counselors, regardless of their work schedule or client would face the need to help someone beset with death-wish or anxiety of it. The person might be one’s own parent, spouse, child, friend or someone else’s. Helping old persons cope with death may be made easier for those counselors who are familiar with the known psychosocial aspects of death among the elderly.

Theorists concerned with the psychology of aging have considered awareness of death; its increasing certainty, and its temporal nearness as central to their formulations (Butler: 1963; Cumming & Henry: 1961; Erikson: 1950). Empirical study, however, has not been clearly based on these formulations. Rather, what we find is a whole array of studies, diverse in conceptualization and methodology, spanning almost three decades that are difficult to sort out and integrate. This review is based on the existing literature on the following areas as they relate to the elderly: talking about death, death fears, dying, suicide attitude toward death, and bereavement.

Concept about Death: The meaning of life and death is clichéd question as there are no experts on the issue and it cannot be defined comprehensibly. Yet, we all have some experience of and/or cognitive perception of both life and death. Philosophers have always attempted to speculate on death from their higher perception of it and it is spoken more in a metaphorical
language. Death for some people is end of every thing as a blind wall and for others it is a door to a new life. From a spiritual perspective, life and death have two generic meanings: life is the plan of Nature; it has to complete its karma under the play of Maya and having completed its full circle only it can escape its mortal coil in the form of death to be born again and the process goes on till it makes enough spiritual progress for merging with God. And then, there is no come back.

The spiritual perspective can best be explained through the lens of Rabindranath Tagore, the greatest poet and philosophers of 19th and 20th century India and the world. When Aldous Huxley commented about Homer that he speaks of whole truth it meant that “the experiences he records; correspond fairly closely with our experience or potential experiences and correspond with our experiences not on a single limited sector, but all along the line of our physical and spiritual being” (Ratna Roy: Tagore). Similarly, Tagore commanded world respect not so much as the first Asian Nobel Laureate, but more for his search for eternal truth. While exploring the Truth and Beauty of the Nature and the creation as such, he found nothing is devoid of joy; even death is celebration of life as it facilitates the process of succession of life.

The present picture of life is not an end in itself. Life originates from the Great Divine Life like a spark from a great fire. Like the changes in the cosmic phenomena, life also undergoes changes in cyclic manner- infancy to adulthood, then to old age and it culminates in death. Unlike common human beings, he was not afraid of it; rather he viewed it as the form of Lord Krishna, the incarnation of god. It is common that people find it difficult to cope with death anxiety.

Death of near and dear ones is difficult to accept and digest. Health care personnel in hospitals and nursing homes face difficulty in consoling the bereaved people in the event of death of their dear ones and hence, they resort to bizarre behaviors and practices only to avoid the unpalatable situation (Sudnow: 1967; Taylor: 1977). Another survey found that aged people are more concerned with death even though they are aware of its inevitability. Hence, the experts on aging tend to avoid the subject (Was & Scott: 1977). A number of studies, however, report that non institutionalized elderly persons think and talk about death (Beard: 1961; Jeffers, Nichols, & Eisdorfer: 1961; Riley: 1968; Wass: 1977).

On the other hand, a second study has found that half of all the institutionalized elderly people are reported to talk about death (Roberts, Kimesey, Logan & Shaw: 1970); the third study shows that elderly residents talk about death in a group situation (Saul: 1973); and a
fourth study reports that they talk about the subject frequently among themselves (Matse: 1975). Persons near death in geriatric facilities make frequent positive reference to death when opportunity is given to them (Kastendaum: 1967). Studies on old people with the anxiety of it and with reported sickness have shown that nurses respond more slowly to the bell calls from terminal patients than from ordinary patients (Bowers, Jackson, Knight, & Leshan: 1975). Family visits are kept restricted or limited in any regional, metropolitan, and geriatric hospitals to not only facilitate the process of uninterrupted medical treatment, but also to protect the dying period of a person (Glaser & Strauss: 1968).

Thus, old persons often have little opportunity to talk with their loved ones about their impending death and to express their thoughts and feelings about it, and they obtain little emotional support from interaction with others. Many researchers have noted that old persons not only were willing to talk about their death but they actually welcomed the opportunity (Feifel: 1959; Jeffers et al.: 1961; Rebert et al.: 1970; Saul & Saul: 1973; Wass: 1977).

Older people are sometimes ignored in many places for their nagging behaviour or due to busy schedule of family members and friends. At a decrepit old age there is not enough strength left to take care of oneself and naturally older people needs more care and attention. Studies have found that older persons who are dying are pleading for better caring and support (Butler: 1975; Kubler-Ross: 1969; Roose: 1969; Saunders: 1972). Thus, it is found that both institutionalized and non institutionalized old persons think about death and are likely to talk about it when given the chance. These findings are consistent across several techniques of assessment using interview schedules, questionnaires, and observation.

There are exceptions as well and there are situations in which the techniques of assessment are not full proof to arrive at any comprehensive conclusion. A counselor would be in a position to understand the problem much better while working with an elderly client for a number of days or a period of time. The important thing is to establish clearly as to the extent of anxiety prevails in older people, the level of unease continues between the counselor and the patient. If any unease remains; it needs to be studied who is uncomfortable-the client or the counselor? Studies so far have not brought any clear solution to the problem and it requires still more research.
**Phenomenon of Death:** Fear of death is a phenomenon or event which one wishes to avoid or negate. “Anxiety” in the psychoanalytic tradition, is a state of “felt”, impending danger or threat that is unconscious. On the other hand, existential psychology views anxiety as an essential human characteristic, as “as individual’s becoming aware that his existence can become destroyed” (May: 1958, p.50). The fear of death has been conceptualized in a variety of ways like unitary or continuum with the ranges varying from a negative feeling of fear to positive feeling of joy, feeling that may comprise both negative and positive effect at the same time, two-dimensional entity having both cognitive and affective components, complex, multifaceted state, and as part of a larger search for meaning that varies not only from person to person but that changes within a person as he or she grows, matures, and confronts various life events.

Since the perception of it through studies by different scholars are diverse and without any common consensus, contradictions are bound to occur among various findings. The following reviews relating to death anxiety or fear of death among aging people support these contradictions. Studies in this area have been concerned with the assessment of death fears, attitudes, and anxieties and with the identification of factors and conditions associated with them.

**Age:** Lester (1972) found that age was not correlated with death fears, while the contradiction was observed in another study that found that young and middle-aged persons express more fear of death than those who are older (Bengtson, Cuellar, & Agan: 1977). Further, it is observed that aged persons seem to be less fearful of death than persons of younger age groups (Kalish & Reynolds: 1977; Kastenbaum: 1969; Lieberman: 1965). The aged people have its own heterogeneity as groups, and there has been variation in the perception of death fear among various groups.

**Gender:** Gender has not made any difference in the perception of death fear as studies using projective techniques, interviews, and questionnaires of death fear on older people of both the genders show that it is insignificant (Christ: 1961; Rhudick & Dibner: 1961; Swension: 1961; Wass, Christian, Myers, & Murphey: 1979). Lester (1972) and Wass and Sisler (1979) used rating scales on older women and found that they report greater death fears.
**Ethnicity:** So far, only a few studies have examined the factors of ethnicity on death fear among the older people of various ethnic groups, yet it has been found that Black elderly persons have higher death expectations (Butler: 1975; Hill: 1971), more familiarity with death (Kalish & Renolds: 1977), greater fear of violence (National Council on the Aging: 1995), and greater death concern (Kalish & Reynolds: 1977; Myers, Wass, & Murphey: 1980) as compared to white elderly persons.

**Psychophysical Health:** Most studies report that high levels of death fears are associated with individuals who report or who are observed to have poor physical and emotional health (Christ: 1961; Rhudick & Dibner: 1961; Templer & Dotson: 1970; Wass & Sisler: 1979).

**Living Arrangements:** Living arrangements have its influence on the degree of happiness or feeling of security on older people. It is found that older people living in a community are less fearful of death than those living in institutions (Kimsey, Roberts, & Logan: 1972). People, as observed by Shrut in 1958, living in big apartments and secured residential complexes, have less death fear than those in the geriatric health care building of a large center made for the elderly ones.

Again, less death anxiety was found among dying elderly persons in the community than their counterparts who had recently been admitted to a nursing home or who were waiting to be admitted (Lieberman & Coplan: 1970). Institutionalization or admission to shared public places is found to increase the feeling of insecurity among older people with considerable increase of morbidity (Costello & Tanaks: 1961; Killian: 1970; Lieberman: 1961; Markus, Blenkner, Blum, & Downs: 1972), and being in home, on the other hand increase the mortality (Brand & Smith: 1974).

**Demographic conditions:** Studies of demographic variables upon older people in the perception of death fear have yielded conflicting results. Low levels of formal education have been found to be related to negative death attitudes and high degrees of fears (Berman & Hays: 1973; Rieley: 1968; Swenson: 1961; Wass & Sisle: 1979). Whereas, another study finds that
there is no relationship of education for the older people at all in their death fear, thereby making the contradiction clear (Christ: 1961; Rhudick & Dibner: 1961).

Similar discrepancies are found with respect to marital status and living arrangements. Some studies indicate that widowed elderly persons and those living alone have more negative death attitudes and more death fears than married elderly persons (Swenson: 1961; Wass & Sisler: 1979). Again, another study found no such relationship of marriage and living condition impacting on death anxiety among older people (Rhudick & Dibner: 1961).

Socioeconomic background is a probable variable for older people. Survey conducted on people residing in nursing homes or those who are in geriatric hospital as patients show less death fear. It is concluded that economic factors, social environment, and social status are relatively unimportant for institutionalized old persons (Jeffers et al.: 1961). Non-institutionalized elderly persons with incomes of $5,000 or less and rural elderly were found to be more fearful of death than their urban and suburban counterparts (Wass & Sisler: 1979).

Religiosity: How far religious practices and beliefs among older people have influenced them in negotiating death anxiety is in clear contradiction. One study finds that some of the older persons with religious beliefs are less fearful of death than nonreligious older persons (Faunce & Fulton: 1968; Jeffers et al.: 1961; Martin & Wrightsman: 1966). Other studies (Kalish & Reynolds: 1977; Mober: 1965; Swenson: 1961) report that only those with the most conservative and fundamental convictions and habits show relatively low death fear; still others discovered no relationship whatsoever between fear of death and religious belief or activities (Christ: 1961; Kurlycheck: 1976; O’Reilly: 1958; Templer & Dotson: 1970). It also has been found that fear of death is greater among religious older persons than their nonreligious counterparts (Feifel: 1959; Wass & Sisler: 1979).

Rationale and aim of the study

Old age is the final stage of human existence with degeneration of energy and body resources. Socially it is seen as a totality of once whole experiences of life. So society has
created a space of respect for old people. In such societies old are considered the sole carriers of wisdom and knowledge. All of it must have been the reason behind the concept of golden age. There are carious parameters which determined the social conceptions of old age. There are many routes to provide wisdom and knowledge. Apart from it many people consider old age is a matter of care and attention. In the developing countries like India old age has become a significant social issue.

The process of industrialization, urbanization and modernization is ushering changes in value system and traditional family system. With decline of family solidarity various institutions have come up to take care of aged. Generally in India negative factors tend to predominate the decision to enter an old age home, while gerontology has its objective a “Livelier Longevity”, the question arises, what is the effect of old age homes on the well-being of the elderly

All of us want to live a long life, but no one wants to get old. As ridiculous it seems, the same ironic it is. Because instead of enjoying the beautiful dusk of life. Most of elderly people are trapped in Falsehood. Anxieties, uncontrolled nostalgia, irrational assessment of life are main among these. Because of this the desire of elderly people to live a free and unrestrained life without having any responsibility remains unfulfilled. And from this emerges the decline in qualitative life and absence of subjective well-being.

It is not necessary that all elderly people in their old age are afflicted with death anxiety. But in this age, how the absence of thoughts of death is possible. When there are so many stimulators in atmosphere making them aware of their near and unavoidable death? Even the good health is not a guarantee for a long life and some elderly people are found well-coming death because of their painful physical situation.

Further if we discuss about old age home, we find that our society and elderly people both are unable to accept old age homes as an alternative for old age because for a large extent our society is still based on traditional values. Example like Shravan kumar and Dev vrata are still alive in our psyche even today. In this situation, it becomes difficult for elderly people to cope with changing social patterns, social values and social standards. Old age homes are also avoided because friends and the relatives, with whom the person has lived his whole life, they do not find it easy to leave them and to live in old age home. It becomes challenging to accept change according to the age and to get accommodated in new atmosphere.
On the other side, there are many elderly people living with their families, who grew up their vines in hardship and scarcity with a great effort for their up-bringing. So it is natural to have affection for them. In this condition after being neglected by family they find themselves unable to move away, the affinity for son, daughter-in-law and grand-kids atop them from going old age homes. Prestige of oneself, one's family and one's kin compel them to live within family. Because going to old age home is taken as a failure of parents-child relationship. In addition, the inability to accept their changed familial, social, economic and physical role creates many difficulties. Keeping these dilemmas in mind research scholar has created his research's framework the comparative study of death anxiety and subjective well-being between elderly people living with family and living in old age home.

It is anticipated that this research work will come out with important results for the welfare of elderly people. So that elderly people either living with family or in old age homes can enjoy this beautiful dusk of life without having any death anxiety and with subjective well-being.