Chapter 2

Review of Existing Literature on Social Aging
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REVIEW OF EXISTING LITERATURE ON SOCIAL AGING

2.1 Sociological understanding of Aging

The term ‘Aging’ refers to the process of growing older. All organisms can be considered as aging from the moment of conception (Crandall, 1980). It is a biological process that begins at birth and ends in death. This is mainly because the individual develops and matures, both physically and socially, from birth through adolescence. The science concerned with the study of aging is called Gerontology. Also encompassed within the term is a more expansive definition of the study of aging to include the study of later life, old age and older people. There are a number of different perspectives upon the study of aging.

Thus, by aging, we mean the progressive changes, which take place in cells, tissues, and organ systems or the total organism with the passage of time. All living beings change with time in both structure and function, and the changes, which follow the general trend, constitute aging. Aging is a universal phenomenon and no society can escape from it. Our place in the social structure also changes throughout our life span. That is, it assigns roles, expectations, opportunities, status and constraints to people of different ages.

The sociology of aging is concerned with using sociological perspectives to understand aging. Social gerontology is a wider discipline in that it is concerned with approaching aging from a variety of social science perspectives in order to achieve a better understanding of aging and old age rather than for developing sociological theory and insights. As such social gerontology incorporates three distinct perspectives (i.e. individual, social and societal) at two levels of analysis, the microscale and macroscale which illustrate the complexity of the subject area. The microscale approach is concerned with understanding and explaining aging as an individual experience by investigating
such topics as changes in perceived age identity as the individual progresses through the lifecourse (Victor, 2005:5).

2.1.1. Aging Theories

Theory appears to be growing in importance in gerontology today. These are usually defined as the biological, the psychological and the social. The sociology of aging is concerned with using sociological perspectives to understand aging. Social gerontology is a wider discipline in that it is concerned with approaching aging from a variety of social science perspectives in order to achieve a better understanding of aging and old age rather than for developing sociological theory and insights.

The equilibrium theory experienced by the western Europe in the early 20th century is being experienced by India today. The equilibrium theory has three stages. The first stage of equilibrium is characterized by high birth rates (fertility) and high death rates (particularly infant mortality). In the second stage, birth rates remain high while mortality rates are on decline. Finally, there is a returned equilibrium in response to a complex centric of social, economic and environmental factors: both birth (fertility) and death (mortality) rates decline and a state of equilibrium is reached. (Sen. 1994, as cited in Nair, 2014).

According to Bengtson et al. (1997, p. 72), theory can be defined as "the construction of explicit explanations in accounting for empirical findings". In their view, theories of aging can help us understand and explain aging process. More specifically, theories have several functions i.e. integration of knowledge, explanation of knowledge, predictions about what is not yet known or observed, and interventions to improve human conditions. Theories allow integration of knowledge by providing a coherent framework for organizing a large amount of data obtained in empirical studies into a "brief statement that describes linkages among the crucial observations, variables, or theoretical constructs" (Bengton et al., 2008; p.7).

Theories on aging not only provide description of empirically observed phenomena but also emphasize on causal relationship, i.e. how and why they are related, “Incorporating
antecedents and consequences of empirical results” which provides explanation of knowledge (same ref. as above). This knowledge can “lead to subsequent discoveries based on principles proposed by earlier theories” (same ref. as above). This knowledge is valuable to foster “existing knowledge in order to solve problems” and to reduce or diminish unfavorable conditions (same ref. as above).

Many researchers concerning various aspects of gerontology appear relatively unconcerned about theories of aging. Researches on biology of aging focus on empirical models at molecular levels. In psychological researches experimental model of age differences have not been accompanied by similar efforts as integration of findings with theory (Birren and Birren 1990; Salthouse, 1991). Sociological aspect of aging focuses on empirical researches, however, stays relatively unconcerned.

The study of aging examines the social context which defines aging and seeks to understand the position and experience of older people within society and how this is shaped by major structural factors such as class, gender, and ethnicity. According to Victor (2004, p.5), “The meaning and impact of the constraints operating upon the older adult are highly dependent upon the social environment in which the individual encounters them. It is now evident that aging is not a homogeneous experience which affects every individual within the same society in a monolithic fashion. All ‘old people’ are not alike and pre-old-age characteristics such as class and gender continue to exert a strong influence across the life course. To conceptualize old age as an undifferentiated experience is both naive and unhelpful. We all bring to the experience of old age access to various resources—material, health and social—and these are strongly influenced by our experiences prior to ‘old age’. Indeed, with the development of the ideas of the-successful aging’ (Rowe and Kahn, 1999, as cited in Victor, 2005,) the importance of the social context for the shaping of the experience of old age has assumed greater prominence”.

These one of the branches of sociology i.e. Sociology of Gerontology or Social Gerontology focuses on what it means to age in society, that is, personal concerns and social issues associated with aging and the ways in which these themes are influenced
and at the same time influence the society where we live. Thus, according to the sociologists and other social scientists, aging (as devised by C. Wright Mills in context of looking through the lens of sociological imagination) is not an individual problem rather a widespread issue that is faced by both the developed and underdeveloped nations as a whole (Mishra, 2004).

2.1.2. Perspectives of aging

The process of aging can be approached from four distinct perspectives: functional, symbolic, conflict, and emancipation. As such social gerontology incorporates three distinct perspectives individual, social and societal—at two levels of analysis, the microscale and macroscale which illustrate the complexity of the subject area. The microscale approach is concerned with understanding and explaining aging as an individual experience by investigating such topics as changes in perceived age identity as the individual progresses through the life course (Victor, 2005). When focusing upon the social context within which aging occurs, both for groups and individuals, then theories derived from sociological perspectives are most pertinent. A concern with examining and understanding the social context of aging involves studies which look at questions concerned with the adaptation of individuals (a microscale approach) and of questions posed at the macroscale (i.e. concerns with the impact of aging upon social structures and vice versa). According to Victor (2005, p. 15), “Social theories of aging are characterised both by the level of explanation at which they operate and by the assumptions and ideologies that underpin them.

**Functional Perspective:** The functional perspective argues that the elderly persons having knowledge, wisdom and experience help in the continuation of social norms, values and traditions. Hence, negligence of aged individuals needs to be rectified, according to the social situations.

**Conflict Perspective:** The conflict perspective assumes that the aging is problematic for the society. According to this perspective, as the individuals become aged, it leads to the diminishing of power, prestige and privileges, unless these have been maintained by
himself or herself. It argues that the wealthy and powerful individuals have blocked efforts to help the aged because they think spending for aged does not serve their personal interest. Moreover, it points out that the aged individuals, in course of time, lose their memory power and physical strength, thus, their role should be minimized.

Symbolic Perspective: The symbolic perspective examines the symbols and definitions that people use to communicate with one another, symbols that provide people with their view of the world. According to this perspective, all individuals with their features and characteristics, which are the reflections of their age, become the symbol of their respective age groups for others.

Emancipation Perspective: The emancipation perspective is an alternative to above three perspectives for two reasons. First, it abandons the approaches, proposed by the above theoretical perspectives. And, secondly, it gives priority to the liberation of the aged from the exclusion of social, economic and political participation in the society. The process of aging and the problems of the aged can be viewed from many perspectives.

i. Functionalist perspective

Functionalist perspectives have been highly influential in the development of theoretical frameworks in social gerontology. Theories such as disengagement, activity theory, and continuity theory, the thesis of modernization and age stratification theories of aging all developed from the structural-functionalist premises. Structural functionalism is a macrolevel theoretical stance that is concerned with analyzing elements of society (social institutions and structures) in order to elucidate how society is maintained and developed. According Victor (2005, p.16), “Functionalists adopt a similar approach to understanding and theorising about society and are concerned with identifying the functions that particular social arrangements fulfill for any given society. This approach views the elements of society as being functionally interdependent, with the individual and society always seeking to maintain a state of equilibrium between them. In this perspective society is seen as being analogous to a biological system in that it is conceptualized as a number of identifiable and interrelated constituent parts. Each of the individual parts
responds to changes in the other elements of the system”. The major theoretical perspectives of aging are: disengagement theory, modernization theory, labeling theory, activity theory and subculture theory (Baum and Baum 1980 and Crandall 1980, cited from Mishra, 2004).

**ii. Disengagement Theory**

Disengagement theory, according to Victor (2005, p.18), is “Theory which links both micro and macro approaches to the study of aging. Disengagement was the first explicit social theory that was concerned with aging and was originally formulated in Growing Old by Cumming and Henry (1961). This theory posits that, independent of other factors such as poor health or poverty, aging involves a gradual but inevitable withdrawal or disengagement from interaction between the individual and her/his social context and that this process is mutually beneficial. Thus disengagement would be seen as functional or useful, because it facilitates a smooth transfer of power from the old to the young”. According to Dhillon (1992, p.49) “Disengagement theory contains three basic propositions according to two of its proponents” i.e. a) process of mutual withdrawal of aging individuals and society from each other is a usual occurrence; b) this process of withdrawal is inevitable and c) it is also necessary for successful aging.

This theory states that aging involves an inevitable withdrawal of disengagement, resulting in decreased interaction between the aging person and others in the social milieu to which he or she belongs. Atchley (1972) states that disengagement is not usually a single event but instead a gradual process that involves the separation of an individual from several of his or her regular social roles and activities. Dhillon (1992, p.49) emphasized, “These theorists believed that high level of life satisfaction are associated with the aged persons reduction of the number and importance of his role”.

This theory maintains that those entering old age must gradually be phased out of important roles in order for society to function. The disengagement of the society from the individual is only half of the disengagement theory, the other half of the theory maintains that the individual himself withdraws from certain social roles. The basic
assumption of the theory is that both the individual and society are gratified by the process. For the individual, the withdrawal brings a release from societal pressures for continued high level productivity and performance. For society, the withdrawal of the older members presumably allows younger, more energetic, competent and recently trained persons to assume the roles that must be filled in the social system (Dhillon, 1992).

Disengagement theory therefore implies a triple loss for the individual, i.e. a) a loss of roles, b) a restriction of social contacts and relationships, and c) a reduced commitment to social mores and values. Successful aging, from the viewpoint of disengagement theory, implies a reduction in activity levels and a decrease in involvement, until the individual withdraws from all previous activities and becomes preoccupied with the ultimate withdrawal of death. Central to this theory is the assumption that both the individual and the wider society benefit from the process. Withdrawal for the individual may mean a release from social pressures that stress productivity, competition and continued achievement. For society, the withdrawal of older members permits younger, more energetic individuals to take over the roles that need to be filled. Disengagement therefore is seen as a way of permitting an orderly transfer of power between generations. The mutual withdrawal of the individual and society from each other is presented as a necessary condition for both successful aging and the orderly continuation of society. This involves a triple loss—of social roles validated by society, restricted social contact and a reduced commitment to social mores. Disengagement theory had a profound influence upon the development of gerontological research partly because it was the first major theory and thereby generated considerable debate and discussion within the gerontological world. It has also been influential because it appeared to indicate the pathway to ‘successful’ aging. According to Victor (2005, p.19), “The empirical evaluation of disengagement as a theory of aging must address three core aspects of the theory. First, disengagement is a life-long process, for most individuals, it takes place over a period of time rather than suddenly. Throughout the life course the individual is continually acquiring and dropping particular social roles. Hence it is problematic to design a research study which could easily incorporate this ‘lifelong’ perspective.
Second, there is an implicit statement that disengagement is inevitable because death and biological decline are inevitable, although the nature and timing of disengagement will vary between individuals, historically and culturally. Again to establish the inevitability of reduced social engagement poses methodological challenges. Given these very problematic methodological issues this may be a theory it is impossible to test empirically, clearly a major flaw with any theory. However, Daatland (2002) has suggested that disengagement theory was an important stage in the development of gerontology because it identified old age as distinct and important phase of life and because it was an essentially multidisciplinary perspective. Finally, disagreement is seen as adaptive, for both society and individual and reduced social engagement is seen as beneficial.

iii. Activity Theory

The second functionalist theory, Activity theory, is a counterpoint to disengagement theory, since it claims a successful ‘old age’ is can be achieved by maintaining roles and relationships (Powell, 2001). Developed by Havighurst (1963) this perspective maintains that normal and successful aging involves preserving, for as long as possible, the attitudes and activities of middle age. According to Victor (2005, p.21), “Here mid-life is conceptualised as the nirvana of ‘success’ to which we are always looking back and always trying to regain. To compensate for the activities and roles that the individual surrenders with aging, substitutes must be found”.

Activity theory is the antithesis of the disengagement theory. While disengagement theory has been highly influential in the development of social gerontology, empirical testing and debate have exposed its essential frailty. It has, however, had an important impact in stimulating the development of counter-theories of which activity and continuity theories are the most significant. These two theories are concerned with the aging of individuals although, again, approached from a macro level theoretical perspective. It still remains within the structural functionalist paradigm in that it is concerned with the maintenance of equilibrium within society. The focus is upon
adaptation and integration into the social system and, again, it is prescribing a route to successful aging.

This theory, as suggested by Havighurst (Cited from Dhillon, 1992, p.51), is primarily an action theory for successful aging. It consists of three basic premises:

- The majority of the normally aging persons will maintain fairly constant level of activity.
- The amount of engagement of disengagement will be influenced by past life styles and by socio-economic considerations rather than by some intrinsic inevitable process, and
- That it is necessary to maintain or develop substantial levels of social, physical and mental activity if aging experience is to be successful.

It holds that the norms for old age are the same as those for middle aged. Activity theorists believe that if existing roles or relationships are lost, it is important to replace them. Replacement of roles and relationships are necessary because when activity drops, there is corresponding drop in level of life satisfaction. In fact, the activity theory can best be attributed to the perspective of emancipation.

Activity theory is a prescriptive view of aging which argues that activity and engagement offer the path to successful aging. This is a socially based manifestation of the `use it or lose it' conceptualization of successful aging and is the mirror image of disengagement but is equally judgmental and prescriptive. According to Victor (2005, p.21) there are two central assumptions of activity theory, “First, morale and life satisfaction are positively related to social integration and high involvement with social networks: those with high levels of activity and integration are more satisfied. Second, role losses such as widowhood or retirement are inversely correlated with life satisfaction and such losses need to be compensated for by the substitution of compensatory activities”.
According to Dhillon (1992, p.52), “One of major criticisms of this theory is that it may not be role activity that determines high morale, rather it may be that those with high morale can form friendships and have a greater probability of staying active than those with low morale. Another problem is that many older individual's happiness is not obtained by staying active for many older individual prefer what might be called a rocking chair approach to old age”.

iv. Continuity Theory

Continuity theory is based on the premise that the various stages of the life cycle are characterised by a high degree of continuity. As Dhillon (1992, p.52) put it, “Continuity theory does not assert that one must be disengaged or active in order to be well adjusted in the later years but rather, that the decision regarding which roles are to be discarded and which maintained, will in large part be determined by individual's past history and preferred style of life”. Continuity theory holds that, in the course of growing older, the individual will attempt to maintain stability in the lifestyle he/she has developed over the years. Atchley (1999) suggests that continuity theory suggests that in the process of aging, the person will strive to preserve the habits, preferences and lifestyle acquired over a lifetime; that there will be a process of evolution of activities as the individual grows older. As Victor (2005, p.22) put it, “Both disengagement and activity theory suggest that successful aging is achieved by movement in a single direction. Continuity theory, in contrast, starts from the premise that the individual will try to preserve the favoured lifestyle for as long as possible. It then suggests that adaptation may occur in several directions according to how the individual perceives her/his changing status. The theory is rather less dogmatic in that it does not assert that one must disengage, or become active, in order to cope with the aging. Rather the decision regarding which roles are to be disregarded and which maintained will be determined by the individual's past and preferred lifestyle and potentially by structural factors such as income and health. Unlike activity theory, this approach does not assume that lost roles need to be replaced. Continuity theory, therefore, has the advantage of offering a variety of patterns of successful aging from which the individual can choose”. Dhillon (1992, p.52) emphasize
that, “Continuity theory explains that the individual will try to maintain as long as possible his or her preferred life style, and then that adaption can go in several different directions depending on how the individual perceives his or her changing status and attempts to adjust to change”.

According to Victor (2005, p.22) “The disadvantage is the problem of trying to test this theory empirically. Each individual's pattern of adjustment in old age or retirement becomes a case study in which the researcher attempts to determine how successfully the individual was able to continue in her/his previous lifestyle. Building a generally applicable theory from this basis is, therefore, difficult”.

v. Age Stratification Model

Age stratification has been set forth as a model to explain the behaviour of the aged (Riley, Johnson and Fonner, 1972, cited in Dhillon, 1992, p.53). Age is a variable that determines the types of roles and options available to individuals. Chronological age can effects role performance because of biological, legal or social restrictions, that is, biological age limits role alternatives. This theory states that as stratification of society is on the basis of classes, castes or social strata, according to this perspective age is the basis of stratification of the society. One important aspect of age stratification theory is the concept of structural lag (Riley et al. 1994, cited in Giddens. 2006, p.184). This provides an account of how structures do not keep pace with changes in the population and in individual’s lives (ibid). According to Blackburn et al. (2007, p.156), “The age stratification theory also highlights the relationships between advancing age and disadvantages that may arise due to the way social opportunities are structured with in social system.

vi. The Exchange Theory

This theory offers a new perspective from which to view the process of aging and the interaction between the individual and the social system. Dowd (1975, cited in Dhillon,1992) believes that the decreased social interaction in older age can perhaps best be explained in terms of an intricate process of exchange between society and its older
population resulting from older people's power dependent relationships. Power enters the exchange relationships when one of the participants in the exchange values the rewards gained in the relationship more than the other participant does. The exchange theorists’ view of power is that it is derived from imbalance in the social exchange. The exchange theory states that older person's disengagement is not mutually satisfying for the individual and society as claimed by the proponents of the disengagement theory, but rather in the exchange relationships between older persons and society, society enjoys a distinct advantage (idib:54).

vii. Labelling Theory

This theory has been traditionally used by sociologists to explain criminal behaviour and mental illness. The basic assertion of labeling theory is that one derives the concept of self from the interaction with other in one's social milieu. Bengtson (1973) has suggested that this theory can be used to explain some of the behaviour of the aged. The theory states that through the process of labelling, individuals are forced into action out specific roles.

Labelling theory suggests that when a label such as 'senile' or 'old' is given, it has a significant impact on the way individual will be treated and perceived by others. As labelled individual they take on new identities, positions and roles. Often the new identity becomes what is called a 'master status'. The master status is simply the status that over ride all others.

viii. Subculture Theory

Rose and Peterson (1965) proposed that the aged form a subculture and that it is this subculture that defines and gives direction to their behaviour. Rose believes that a subculture among age groups emerges when the group members interact with each other significantly more than they interact with persons in other age categories. This, he asserts occurs when the members (i) have a positive affinity for each other due to such factors as long-standing friendship or common problems, interests or concern and (ii) are excluded
from interaction with other groups in the population to some significant extent. Both sets of circumstances, according to Rose and Petersons (Cited in Dhillon, 1992), apply to the elderly of most societies in which most often the elderly are not actively involved in an occupation or career, are dependent on others for their income, and are generally excluded from the mainstream of life. Subculture theorists generally believe that of all the subculture to which an aged individual belongs, the age subculture is the most powerful. In other words, the ethnic, religious, gender, social class, or occupational subculture are over ridden by age subculture.

ix. **Role Theory**

A role is behaviour expected from individuals who occupy certain positions or a certain status. Most role theorists use what is called the dramaturgical model. The major idea behind the dramaturgical model is that just as actors play different roles on the stage, so individuals play different roles in everyday life.

In 'real' life, the behaviour of an individual is determined by the roles he occupies in society. The roles one holds in society have what might be called 'Social Scripts' attached to them. In everyday life there are numerous directions; that is there are many individuals who have the power to make another act in what they consider to be an appropriate manner. These directors have power and can supply sanctions in order to make certain that one performs one's roles according to the standards they lay down for them.

x. **Phenomenological theory**

The basic idea behind phenomenological theory is that to understand human behaviour one must understand the individual’s perceptual world. It has been recognised that individuals see the world very differently from one another. The major idea is that through life experience and socialisation, one develops a perceptual framework through which he/she selectively perceive and interprets the world. Thus individual can perceive the same phenomena very differently. For example, aged individual may respond differently.
2.2. **Recent Research trends**

Population aging is the most important emerging demographic phenomenon in the world today. The population of old people is increasing globally, both in absolute terms and in proportion to the total population. In the reports published by UNFPA by Raju (2011), in 1950, the world population aged 60 years and above was 205 million (8.2 per cent of the population) which will reach to 606 million (10 per cent of the population) in 2000. By 2050, the proportion of aged 60 years and above is projected to increase to 21.1 per cent, which will be two billion in number. Asia has the maximum number of world’s elderly (53 per cent), followed by Europe (25 per cent). This pressure of increasing numbers of aged will further increase in the next 50 years. In 2050, 82 per cent of the world’s elderly will be in developing regions of Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean while only 16 per cent of them will reside in the developed regions of Europe and North America. Population aging is therefore emerging as the major problem of developing countries. Aging was not only an Asian tendency up until 2000, but it is going to continue to dominate Asia in the next century as well (UNFPA, 1999).

The increasing number of elder has got the attention from social scientists. The increasing number and changing demographic structure in few years have made the elderly a socially visible group of the population. The systematic study of aged is very new phenomena. There is lack of literature and most of them are based on western countries. Gerontology is the study of aging and has three main components are the biological, the psychological and the social aspect. It is a multidisciplinary field of research in which each of these perspectives has an important contribution. The biological approach emphasize on the impact of aging upon physiological system; the psychological focus upon mental functions and ability, and the social deals with social aspect of aging is usually referred to as social gerontology (Sati, 1996).

By the end of 1950's came a multi university consortium which had three volumes which would document the scope methods and conceptualization of studies on aging. The first volumes was 'Hand book of Aging and the Individual: Psychological and Biological Aspects' edited by J.E. Birren in 1959. Two additional volume 'Handbook of Social
Gerontology which appeared shortly afterwards were: 'Societal Aspects of Aging' edited by C. Tibbitts in 1960 and 'Aging in Western Societies' edited by E. W. Burgess in 1960. These are landmarks in social scientific research on aging and constitute an excellent bibliographic coverage on studies on aging.

The 'Journal of Gerontology' 1949 was the first journal devoted to the study of aging. The second in the field 'Gerontologist' followed in 1968. A program of socio-economic studies of aging was established at Duke University in 1959. Some major publications under this program during the period 1959-64 were 'Employment, Income and Retirement problems of Aged' edited by J.M. Kreps, 'Social Structure and the Family Generational Relations' by Shanas and Streib.

The important review of gerontological research which marked the beginning of the 1960's was edited by Matilda, W. Riley and supported by the Russell Sage Foundation brought out by end of the decade with 3 volumes.

'Aging and Society: An Inventory of Research Findings' by Riley and Foner in 1968 organised an enormous body of empirical research on social scientific aspects of human aging. The other two were - 'Aging and the Professions' by Riley and Johnson in 1969 and 'A Sociology of Age Stratification' by Riley, Johnson and Foner in 1971. It constitutes an integrated effort to explain the significance of age for the allocation of social resources and opportunities over the life span. These volumes are largely interdisciplinary.

The increasing longevity as one of the main future social issues of concern by the World Assembly on Aging in Vienna, 1982 and the International Plan of Action on Aging by the UN General Assembly provided a great motivation for aging research in India. Further, the Assembly elected October 1st as the International Day for the Elderly in 1990 and the International Year of Older Persons in 1999 with the theme ‘towards a society for all ages’ and an objective to increase the awareness of the fast changing demographic trends of the elderly, promote action policies and promote research. Over the years, attention in the area of aging has increased concerning multidisciplinary efforts and innovative
strategies to cope up with the increasing problems of the aged within the changing society.

The problems of aged are unique and different because they are a heterogeneous group. This has been added and doubled with the unprecedented change and rapidly change in contemporary socio-economic circumstances affecting their status and living conditions. The requirements and problems of the aged vary significantly according to their age, socio-economic status, health, living status and other such background characteristics (Siva Raju, 2002). Alam (2006) emphasize on the living condition of the elderly, for elders staying with their families is the dominant living arrangement their economic security and well-being largely depends on the economic capacity of the family.

Vijay kumar, (1999) discusses, in traditional Indian society, family, kinship and community were strong enough to provide social security to needy in the such as disabled, old and weaker family members. But he process of Urbanization, industrialization and the globalisation have deeply impacted our values and norms of traditional Indian society. Migration of youth to urban areas, participation of women in workforce, the scarcity of space in urban areas which has affected the traditional joint family system are important factors affection the status and condition of the elderly specially in rural India. As a result, the elderly depend on ‘money-order economy’ and their closeness with their children is only from a distance.

Focusing on the issues of physiological, economic, emotional and interpersonal facets of aging Prakash (2004) says, it influence the social functioning and welfare of individuals in different ways. Altering traditional values, mobility of the younger generation, changes in family structure and changing role of women have contributed to a ‘crisis in caring’ for the aged. Many facets of the generation gap contribute to marginalization of older persons and their wisdom and experience by the younger generation, leading to conflicts, lack of respect and decline of authority, neglect and sometimes even exploitation or abuse (Raju, 2011:2).
The post-independence period or 20th century has got the attention on the issue of aging in a scientific way by the researcher. But the development of gerontology is still in its infancy in developing country like India. But recently the researcher from the different field like social science and social work has looked into the issue of aging. Only recently older people were selected as a priority group in implementation of social welfare policies, plans and government initiatives (Gokhale, 2005).

Research on the issue of aging has been carried out by few Indian institutes trying to understand the living conditions of the aged in different parts of India. In those studies they have emphasized the issues related to their socio-psychological and problems related to their health and the some of the studies also focused on the welfare schemes meant for the welfare of the aged. Various organizations such as Census, National Sample Survey Organization, Central Statistical Organization also focused on the different aspects and issues of elderly. An annotated bibliography by TISS in 1999 on research on the aged was documented in two volumes starting from 1972 to 2000. These researches were later reviewed by the Bose and Shankardass (2006) these were mostly conducted in the different states of India such as Bihar, Orissa, Punjab, Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Kerala, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. And they suggested that there is limited theoretical and methodological focus. Further adding to that they said all the aspects of aging has not been covered or uniformly researched. The areas covered under the study were: Problems of adjustment and coping; post-retirement life satisfaction, family and elderly; care giving; social supports; attitudes; intergenerational relations; leisure time utilization roles; changes and the institution of family; elder care across subcultures demographic changes and its impact; quality of life; and widowhood problems (Ramamurti, 2005; as cited in Raju, 2011:4).

Nandal and Raju (et al., 1987, Siva Raju, 2004), have focused on the economic condition of the elderly, who have hold on their property and resources are enjoying the decision making power in the family and who have surrendered have no control over source of income. The status of decision making is faced by aged women more than men. An empirical study of 320 elderly done by Khan and Raikwar (2010) in Delhi suggests that
89 per cent elderly respondent expected that their family should take care of them but in reality only 37 were looked after by the family. As study concludes the 92 per cent respondent felt that their opinion should be considered while taking decision in the family and in reality only 26 per cent actively participate in this process. The opinion of younger generation was not very positive for the elders.

One of the another qualitative study of the aged by Pandya (2010), with 906 elderly from Mumbai on the role of spirituality and aging process concludes that spirituality was perceived to provide support, helps in relationship building and maintaining, helps in coping with stress and issues related to death and dying.

In the studies of Kumar (1991) with the 460 respondent from the state of Andhra Pradesh, the 50 per cent sample was drawn from the urban centers and rest was from rural area. The study was focused on the family life of the old and living conditions of the aged, and changes taking place in their interpersonal relationship due to the forces of modernization, urbanization etc., and also dealt with the socio-psycho and economic and health problems of the elderly respondents.

Another study by Dhillon and Poduwal’s study (1992), the younger people from the urban area considered their traditional role is to take care of the elderly. In urban poor, the support from the family acted as coping mechanism for economic and social survival even when they are not staying with children. Contrary to the traditional view the elders can contribute, in the family apart from economic help in building good relationships by understanding the limitations and changes of the modern family. The elderly preferred to provide help rather than receiving assistant to enjoy their status and maintain good family relationships.

The impact of process of urbanization, modernization, industrialization and globalisation on the traditional institutions and socio-cultural values has been studied by the Phillipson (2002). This reflects that it has negative and leads to individualism and selfishness. The change in the value system has negative impacted the relationship between the young and old.
Sharma, Dak’s (1987) have edited a book focusing on the socio-psychological problems of aged of India. This book contains 23 short research papers and explains the impact of modern forces such as education urbanization and industrialization leads to disintegration of traditional joint family system and younger generation inclined towards individualism and materialistic attitude. Migration has impacted the life style of aged in India.

M.S. Randhawa (1991) in his book The Rural and the Urban Aged: A Sociological Perspective has focused on the problems of the aged in the rural and urban districts of Punjab. The research has highlighted the different aspects of problems of aged in urban and rural areas and studied the social adjustment, attitudes and beliefs of aged and their family life.

The study sponsored by Planning Commission of the Government of India was conducted by K.C. Desai and R. D. Naik with retired personnel served as gazetted and non-gazetted govt. servents from Bombay. And concluded that majority of the elders are maintaining good relation with family and respect for elders is still a value in our culture.

In another study conducted in an urban area of Udaipur, Rajasthan by H.S. Bhatia observed that the elders face retirement is a social and economic event and they face it without planning and preparation. This leads to greater deprivation and restricts their social activities. Despite many changes taking place in elder’s life family plays a important role and remains great support and center of life for elders.

2.3. Debate on Globalization

Globalization carries different meaning for different people. Some see it a medium to fill up their pockets with wealth at the expense of the poor and downtrodden, and for others it is a gateway to open up free trade between countries. Bagchi (1994) says, globalization extends to all area of the earth and all areas of life; it invades our inner world as never before. As it is applied to an economy and a society, the word might mean the process of connecting it with the world in an intricate network of flows of trade, services, capital, people, information and culture. As discussed by Joshi (2011:34) a new political economy is now shaping the lives of present and future generation of older people. The
key changes has been the moved from the cultural tradition and social norms that defined growing old, to the more individual structure-privatized pensions, privatized health and social care that increasingly inform the current period.

The roots of newly emerging forces of globalization have been traced in specific economic and political developments in the late 1980s or early 1990s. These events include the end of cold war, dismantling of state socialism in the USSR and the collapse of the Berlin Wall - all that marked the victory of the western liberal economic thoughts (Sengupta, 2013).

While a number of social theorists examined the social content of globalization, three sociologists, namely Giddens, Robertson and Waters pioneered a specifically sociological definition of the concept notably at the time of its infancy Giddens looked at globalization as a consequence of the distinct sociological theme of modernity. Giddens has argued that the organizational clusters in terms of world capitalism, industrialization and modern nation states universalize the global network and also produce 'time-space distanciation' that makes local-global interface a complex problem. As Gidden’s says: Globalization can then be defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events many miles away and vice versa This is a dialectical process because such happenings may move in an obverse direction from the very distanciated relation that shape them. Local transformation as much a part of globalization as the lateral extension of social connections across time and space (1990: 64).

In his introduction to Alternative Modernities, Dilip Gaonkar writes first of the common roots and global spread of modernity: Born in and of the West some centuries ago under relatively specific socio-historical conditions, modernity is now everywhere. It has arrived not suddenly, but slowly, bit by bit, over the long durée awakened by contact; transported through commerce; administered by empires, bearing colonial inscriptions; propelled by nationalism; and now increasingly shared by global media, migration and capital. . . . [It is] no longer from the West alone, although the West remains the major clearinghouse of global modernity (Gaonkar, 2001:1).
2.3.1. Globalization and India

It has also been observed that globalization driven by liberal economic policy in India, has actually increased rural indebtedness, landlessness, food insecurity, child labour, casualisation of work, wage gaps between skilled and unskilled labour, and the incidence of social pathologies such as violence and intimidation even as global culture has brought in its wake some changes in the lifestyles of the non-poor (Shurmer, Smith 2000: 2; Acharya and Marjit 2000: 3503-3510; as Cited in Sengupta, 2013). It has also been argued that the overall impact of globalization has been a global crisis of which India and many other Asian and Eastern European countries have been made victims (Chossudovsky 1999: 15; as Cited in Sengupta, 2013).

Social analysis of globalization is obviously a complex exercise in that it includes all aspects of human life of which economy is only a part, regardless of how important or fundamental this part maybe (Sengupta, 2013). The present century studies are more concentrated on changing age structure and consequent aging of population. Demographic forecasts indicate that striking changes occurring age structure of the world’s population by 2050. For the world as a whole, the proportion of elderly to total population (22 per cent) is expected to outnumber children (20 Per cent) by 2050. In the developed countries, the proportion of elderly (33 per cent) is expected to be more than double that of children (15 per cent).

2.3.2. Theories of globalization.

As Bauman (2003) argues ‘Globalization is clearly a very important change’; it can even be argued that ‘it is the most important change in human history’. This is reflected in many domains, but particularly in social relationships and social structures, especially those that are widely dispersed geo-graphically. “In the era of globalization … shared humanity face[s] the most fateful of the many fateful steps” it has made in its long history (Bauman 2003 : 156, as cited in Ritzer, 2011:2). Work, rest, food and time, space and movements as well, no longer have any connection with traditional forms. It is
It is commonly said that with the new modes of transport distance no longer exits and indeed, man has vanquished space. He is able to travel about the entire globe (Ellul, 1964:328).

What is globalization? Is it merely a buzzword or a meaningful concept of theoretical enquiry? What is new about globalization? When one looks at the maze of literature on globalization, one finds that the interpretative context of globalization has been the fast changing world events in the last one and half decades pointing towards the globe as an inclusive single place. However, a close look at its various conceptual constructions reveals that globalization is beset with the problems of theoretical inadequacies. Current formulations of globalization include several antithetical and mixed concepts such as homogenization, differentiation, hybridization, plurality, localism and relativism and also the mixed concept like 'glocalisation' (Sengupta, 2013). Every society has norms which represents a criterion of the normal. When these norms change their character, a disturbance of equilibrium ensures and for the man who has not kept pace with the changes, neurosis. Indirect influences have operated on the norms of the modern society and these norms have been transformed without men knowing what was happening (Ellul, 1964:333).

Ritzer (2011:4) in his book ‘Globalization’ discussed that how the current epoch of globalization is different, prior to the current epoch of globalization it could be argued that one of the things that characterized people, things, information, places, and much else was their greater solidity. People either did not go anywhere or they did not venture very far from where they were born and raised; their social relationships were restricted to those who were nearby. Much the same could be said of most objects (tools, food, and so on), which tended to be used where they were produced. The solidity of most material manifestations of information stone tablets, newspapers, magazines, books, and so on – also made them at least some-what difficult to move very far. Furthermore, since people didn’t move very far, neither did information. Places were not only quite solid and immoveable, but they tended to confront solid natural (mountains, rivers, oceans) and humanly constructed (walls, gates) barriers that made it difficult for people and things to exit or to enter emphasized by Ritzer (2011:4).
As Ellul (1964) says technical invasion does not involve the simple addition of new values to old ones. It does not put new wine into old bottles. It does not introduces new content into old forms. The old bottles are all being broken (Ellul, 1964:121). As discussed by Ritzer (2011:5) that, the increasing rate over the last few centuries, and especially in the last several decades, that which once seemed so solid has tended to “melt” and become increasingly liquid. Instead of thinking of people, objects, information, and places as being like solid blocks of ice, they need to be seen as tending, in recent years, to melt and as becoming increasingly liquid. Ritzer (idib) further adds that solid material realities (people, cargo, newspapers) continue to exist, but because of a wide range of technological developments (in transportation, communication, the Internet, and so on) they can move across the globe far more readily. Everywhere we turn, more things, including ourselves, are becoming increasingly liquefied. Liquid phenomena not only move easily, but once they are on the move they are difficult to stop.

Imperialism describes methods employed by one country to gain territorial control over another, in order to exercise political, economic, and territorial control over it. The idea of imperialism has come to be associated with rule over vast regions. This characteristic leads it to be associated with globalization. Colonialism involves more formal mechanisms of control over a territory, entailing the creation of an administrative apparatus to run a colony’s internal affairs. Development as a project focused on the economic development of specific nations. The project advocated import-substitution, wherein instead of relying on imports from the North, the South was encouraged to produce its own industrial products (Ritzer, 2011:50).

A major critique of the development project emerged in the form of dependency theory. Adherents of this theory argued that instead of promoting development, in reality the development project led to the South’s greater dependency on the North. Underdevelopment is not traceable to internal sources in a particular nation. Rather, it is a product of the relationship between developed and underdeveloped countries in the capitalist system (ibid).
As Ritzer (2011) discussed, Americanization is defined as the export of products, images, technologies, practices, and behavior that are closely associated with America and Americans. Anti-Americanism is an intense and non-homogeneous global process, comprising distinct forms, causes, and expressions. Neo-liberalism emerged in the 1930s as a combination of the liberal commitment to individual liberty and neo-classical economics. The free operation of the market and minimal intervention by the state were the cornerstones of the theory. Under neo-liberalism, the operation of free markets is considered to be crucial. It emphasizes a commitment to deregulation of the markets. Free markets are also portrayed as being intrinsically linked to a democratic political system that facilitates individual economic well-being. Although the theory advocates “limited government,” it favors state intervention to facilitate business interests and the reduction of barriers to the free movement of capital across national borders. Rather than rendering the state irrelevant, neo-liberalism has modified the functioning of the state in order to facilitate the functioning of the market (ibid:51).

As elaborated by Ellul (1964) in ‘The Technological Society’, even the most superficial observers can see that this transformation of housework by the machine has brought about a completely different style of living. Ellul (1964:326) further discuss, wife and children no longer fulfill their traditional function. A new relation exits between husband and wife and between parents and children. In a different area of private life, there is the wide range of effects mechanization has had upon food, for example, through the various new methods of preservation and storage (Ellul, 1964:327).