



## SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION BETWEEN AGEING AND YOUTH IN GLOBALIZED INDIA

Dr. Mohammad Rafeek<sup>1</sup> and Dr. Varsha Bajpai<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor , Dept. of Sociology , Shree Krishna Janka Devi P.G. College , Mangalpur, Kanpur Dehat.

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor , Dept. of Sociology , Brahmavart P.G. college , Mandhana, Kanpur.



### ABSTRACT

*There has been a rapid population growth across the globe in 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century. This has brought many challenges to the developing countries. Among them one of the challenges is demographic shift. This dramatic population growth is driven by more people surviving beyond childhood and having children of their own. Not everyone believes so, fearing that too many people will put unsustainable strain on resources. Humans are "a plague on the Earth", says David Attenborough, nature documentary-maker and patron of NGO Population Matters. "Either we limit our population growth or the natural world will do it for us.*

This paper looks at -

- Concerns of social transformation
- The State of Affairs: Youth and the Senior Citizens
- The Scenario of Globalization and India
- The Prudence of Social Transformation between Ageing and the Youth

**KEY WORDS:** *growth across , Social Transformation , dramatic population growth.*

### INTRODUCTION:

Ageing and youth is a perpetual natural phenomenon since the initiation of life forms on the earth. In the current millennium the population of human beings has acquired a dimension and trend that was never witnessed before. On the other hand the technology developed by human beings for their development (the question of survival occupies a back seat with the development of science and technology) has widened the horizons of aspirations of all persons. The critical elements asking for an open window to look about the world they are in and to transform it to suit to their vision are the youth. Youth are defined as those aged 15 to 29 in the national youth policy, 2014. This age-group constitutes more than a quarter (27.5%) of country's population.

The pride of population of a country is aged persons who have crossed the age of 60 years. The bench mark of aged persons has been devised by the Census of India. On the other hand the treasure of a country's population is children, adolescence and the youth who gradually replace the old generation. When youth alter the socially ascribed status of their parents into a socially achieved status for themselves, it is called social transformation. When the phenomenon is reflected at large scale, beyond individual instances, then the social system as a whole is said to be transformed.

The transformation of societies is also a regular feature of the process of human development. It may not be a universal phenomenon, due to regional and intra-regional differences among societies of nations.

The dimensions of social transformation, in the present millennium, are associated with globalization, a universal phenomenon, which has enveloped all populations of the globe. Thus social transformation has to be viewed in terms of youth and aged persons in context of globalization.

The article under process attempts to overview the situation of youth and old age persons in India under the domain of globalization. This is a 'three – point problem' under the ambit of youth and old populations, their situation and aspirations leading to social transformation with the demands and commands of globalization.

The contents of the article have been arranged logically starting with the concerns of social transformation, the state of affairs of youth and the senior citizens, their exposure to social transformation, the scenario of globalized India and the prediction of social transformation between ageing and the youth in India.

- a. The Concerns of Social Transformation
- b. The State of Affairs: Youth and the Senior Citizens
- c. The Scenario of Globalization and India
- d. The Prudence of Social Transformation Between Ageing and the Youth

#### **a. The Concerns of Social Transformation –**

Social transformation is the process by which large scale cultural modification occurs in a society.

The main characteristics of social transformation are:

(i) Social change occurs among all the components of a society uniformly, meaning thereby that social change involves the whole community. Thus social change may be visualized as a universal phenomenon.

(ii) The response to social change varies according to the demographic and socio-economic structure of the society concerned. For example different age-groups like old, mature, adult, and young sections of a community may respond in their own fashion.

(iii) The social dimensions of change may not be uniform in space. Communities of the same country may show diversity in their response to social change. Some communities may lag behind while others may march on hand-in-hand with changing social aspirations. This phenomenon is universal to India as a whole in so far as transformation of the society is concerned.

(iv) The nature and speed of social change are affected by and are related to time factor. It is because of varying geographical conditions which may influence the reach and the time lapse of the communities involved in the process of social change. In the same country or region, not all communities attain the uniform level of social development simultaneously. In India the predominant factor in this respect is the character of the plural society inhabiting the country. The life style, age and sex structure, family structure, beliefs, faith, technological awareness, level of exposure to different cultures, gender differences in perception of 'change' versus 'tradition'

The cultural modification is reflected in a comprehensive contemporary change in the outlook, thinking and working in a society leading to a harmonious approach to achievement of goals set for social obligations acceptable to all sections of the society.

The structure of the Indian society is complex. The members of the society belong to different age and sex groups, socio-economic strata, beliefs and faith, access to information and exposure to internet facilities etc. It may be underlined that the members of a society are responsive to contemporary situations of the nation they belong to. In the need, and call to an optimistic response lies the concern for social transformation. Homogeneity of response leads to objective transformation of a society.

Youth are better equipped to reach their full potential when they are healthy, well-educated, and have opportunities to achieve their aspirations. With a suitable environment to achieve their potential; the youth may become an immense source of productivity, innovation and creative dynamism to promote

transformation. The aged groups, on the other hand, may absorb the changes in so far as their social status remains intact in the changing scenario of contemporary situations.

#### **b. The State of Affairs: Youth and the Senior Citizens -**

In India the segment of population between age-group 15-24 is defined as youth, as per Census of India, 2011. On the other hand the National Youth Policy, 2014, defines youth as those between 15-29 years of age. This age-group constitutes 27.5% of India's population. The paper takes account that the youth population of the country is above a quarter of the total population. This is significant in context of the total number of youth population in the world. There are more young people between the ages of 10 and 24 today than at any other time in human history. It is also significant to note that 90 per cent of the total youth population (10 to 20 years) lives in developing countries. The highest proportion of young people today is in poor countries (India is not counted among the rich countries yet), where barriers to their development and fulfillment of their potential are the highest. The youth population has an important role to play in social transformation as potential demographic dividend by constituting skilled stock of human capital.

The situation of the youth in the country shows that the instrument of social transformation in the world today lies in the hands of youth and the situation of youth is faced with challenges where conflict situation may arise between development goals and age-groups of claiming populations.

A deeper insight in the capability of youth to become leaders of social transformation lies in the level of literacy. Literacy in India is a key for social transformation. The literacy level of youth in the country is according to UNESCO estimates is 90.18%. It is 92.87% for males and 87.21% for females. According to Education for All - Global Monitoring Report, 2007, the total literacy rate among 15+ populations is 61% (Male-73%, Female-48%). In addition 29% of women (47% of urban and 20% of rural) have 10+ years of schooling and 38% of men (49% of urban and 31% of rural) have 10+ years of schooling.

So far as economic situation of youth is concerned, 36% of women and 67% of men age 15-24 are employed. One percent of women and 8% of men aged 15-24 are household heads. It is further observed that 29% of currently married men age 15-24 are heading their own households.

The situation of old age persons may be discussed now. For the entirety of recorded human history, the world has never seen as aged a population as currently exists globally. This may be an important issue in social transformation of a country like India we are debating about. In context of India the situation is not as alarming as in western countries. It is because of the inherent social custom to care for children and aged persons.

So far as the situation of old age persons (60+) in India is concerned, the proportion of the population aged 60 years and above is 8% in 2011 and has been projected to increase to 20% by the year 2050. There are 7.7% males and 8.4% females in the total aged population. The percentage of old in the rural component of old age persons in 2011 is 8.1% and the urban component of old age persons is 7.9%. This shows that comparatively a larger percentage of old age persons live in rural areas.

On an average the demographic scale of old age persons shows that India's population is demographically young. The sex ratio shows an increasing trend from 94 women per 100 men in 1991 to 105 in 2011 and a projected 105 by 2026. The number of aged women is supposed to increase.

India has an inbuilt tradition to take care of the aged members of the family through joint family system. With an increase in nuclear families in the country the aged persons are facing problems. The country adopted 'National Policy on Older Persons' in 1999 to look after the aged population. The policy strives to ensure the well-being of senior citizens and improve quality of their lives through providing specific facilities, concessions, relief, services etc. and helping them cope with problems associated with old age.

#### **c. The Scenario of Globalization and India-**

We are debating social transformation in context of globalization in India.

The term globalization means international integration. It includes an array of social, political and economic changes. Unimaginable progress in modes of communications, transportation and computer technology have given the process a new lease of life. The world is more interdependent now than ever before. So is our country.

It was in early 1990s that the Indian economy witnessed dramatic policy changes. The new economic model known as 'Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization' (LPG) in the country, was introduced. The aim was to make the Indian economy one of the fastest growing economies in the world. Many reforms were initiated with regard to industry, trade and social sector so that country's economy can be made competitive. The economic changes initiated have had a dramatic effect on the overall growth of the economy. It also led the integration of the Indian economy into the global economy.

#### **d. The Prudence of Social Transformation between Ageing and the Youth-**

Social transformation between ageing and youth in context of international economic integration (globalization), i.e. globalization needs a vision of sustainability rather than of conflict and disaster. The youth of today in the country holds the key for social transformation acceptable to all age groups.

In India with majority of its population aged less than 30, the problems and issues of its old age persons has not received due attention in time. To reap the advantage of demographic dividend, the focus is mainly on the children and the youth and fulfillment of their basic needs for proper development. 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 so far. With the increase of nuclear families the aged persons are being marginalized in so far as their well being is concerned.

Ageing is not an event but a process. Ageing is a universal phenomenon. Globalization has changed the face of India to a great extent in terms of development. Ageing scenario in India show that the number of people above 60 will be increasing in the coming years and by 2020, 11.1% population will be over 60 years and by 2040 this will increase to 17.5% and in 2050 the population above 60 years will be 21.3%. The impact of globalization on the old is multi-faceted.

We all know that in ancient Indian society ageing is considered as a stage of giving up all the worldly pleasures and preparing themselves for the next world. Today ageing is contextual and viewed differently by the society and individuals do not want to give up their 'life' during this stage.

In our country the byproducts of globalization are mass culture, use of technology and explosion of information. Not all age-groups can be expected to absorb and act according to the *diktat* of globalization. Human beings have thinking power, creativity and technology to face all odds. The number of old age persons is going to be increasing, as we have seen in the preceding pages. This demographic category will have to be taken care of by state. 'National Policy on Older Persons', 1999, is a proof that old age shall not be neglected and should not be neglected.

Young people in India have the potential to be critical elements for social transformation. Comprising about one quarter of the country's population, today's youth are tomorrow's parents, workers, responsible citizens and aged persons too. The ways in which young people are able to address their aspirations and challenges and fulfill their potential will influence current social and economic conditions and the well-being and livelihood of future generations as observed by United Nations Commission on Population and Development, 2012.

On the other hand old age groups in particular are undergoing a change in terms of their lifestyle, world outlook and the relationships in the society. The need of the day is the empowerment of elderly. They can be an effective asset to the prevailing social system as a social unit and not as an economic burden. 'Healthy Ageing, Active Ageing, Ageing with confidence, Happy ageing' etc. are today's concepts of ageing. They are considered as the goal of life by the United Nations and the World Health Organization.

The changed outlook will pave the way for smooth social transformation leading to a sustainable world.

Young people need a favorable entrepreneurial ecosystem to realize their full potential. Once their energy gets a positive bearing to act and to transform the world of their vision there shall be no conflict but harmony, the key for sustainable earth. The world of today has been conceived and created by the young and energetic people overmillenniums. We know that it is the young who has mental elasticity to think against the grains and physical ability to perform humongous tasks. The youth needs to realize this.

Through the new sustainable development goals, governments and the international community have an unprecedented occasion to enrich the lives of young people and support the development of the capabilities they will need to expand their individual choices and shape the innovative and sustainable future of the planet.

There is no conflict between youth and old in so far as social transformation is concerned. Both are complimentary. In the human society, ageing was considered as a social phenomenon rather than physiological. Ageing is always understood in the background of social milieu. A deeper understanding of ageing in the present day society needs the review of ageing as a process at the individual level and at the societal level.

Investing in human capability is essential for social transformation and sustainable, resilient national development. It needs to begin with youth through the cycle of child-youth and old age.

### CONCLUSION –

At a time when the global population of people ages 65 and older is expected to triple to 1.5 billion by mid-century, public opinion on whether the growing number of older people is a problem varies dramatically around the world. Concern peaks in East Asia, where nearly nine-in-ten Japanese, eight-in-ten South Koreans and seven-in-ten Chinese describe aging as a major problem for their country. Europeans also display a relatively high level of concern with aging, with more than half of the public in Germany and Spain saying that it is a major problem. Americans are among the least concerned, with only one-in-four expressing this opinion.

These attitudes track the pattern of aging itself around the world. In Japan and South Korea, the majorities of the populations are projected to be older than 50 by 2050. China is one of most rapidly aging countries in the world. Germany and Spain, along with their European neighbors, are already among the countries with the oldest populations today, and their populations will only get older in the future. The U.S. population is also expected to get older, but at a slower rate than in most other countries.

Public concern with the growing number of older people is lower outside of East Asia and Europe. In most of these countries, such as Indonesia and Egypt, the proportion of older people in the population is relatively moderate and is expected to remain so in the future.

India needs to devise appropriate social and economic policies to allow the rapid increase in the number of elderly, who will make up as much as a fifth of the population by the middle of this century. Although India will be the youngest country in the world by 2020 with a median age of 29 years, the number of elderly people is likely to increase significantly after that.

By 2021, the elderly in the country will number 143 million. Presently, the elderly can be divided into three categories: the young old (60-70) the middle-aged old (70-80) and the oldest old (80 plus). The increase in life expectancy over the years has resulted in an increase in the population of the elderly. While the overall population of India will grow by 40% between 2006 and 2050, the population of those aged 60 and above will increase by 270%.

Out of this, the oldest old segment, which is the most vulnerable on account of suffering from disabilities, diseases, terminal illness and dementia, is also the largest growing segment of the elderly population, at a rate of 500%. The increasing population of the elderly is “a development concern that warrants priority attention for economic and social policies to become senior citizen-friendly,” the report said. Like any other country ageing is a challenge and a problem. We need to make people work- whatever

the age. If they are working that solves half the problem. We have to improve their skill levels, education and health, that's the key

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**Dr. Mohammad Rafeek**

Assistant Professor , Dept. of Sociology , Shree Krishna Janka Devi P.G. College , Mangalpur, Kanpur Dehat.