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How Do You Define Ageing: A Narrative Analysis

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Abstract

Ageing is taken as an influential process in human life worldwide. The ageing perspectives from the world's population engaged in social media platforms is principally noteworthy, since the world suffers a significant change in human lives through ageing and are ultimately reaching deaths. A narrative analysis sheds new light on the multifaceted ageing phenomenon bringing changes in all the spheres of human's lives and that could help to prepare ourselves for confronting the challenges on the onset of ageing process. The study aims to address the experimental question tempts to define the term ageing. For proceeding with this question, the researcher has used various social media platforms including Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook were utilized to exactly narrate how ageing is defined. The main objective designed while considering the core values of the study addresses the question: How social media community define old age? Ageing is finally traced through different approaches and is defined from various perspective of social media community. The vote towards ageing as more of a biological, social, psychological, or mental process has been expressed by the findings of study that directly exposed ageing as more of a biological phenomenon, in comparison to social, mental and psychological process.

Keywords: Ageing, Old age, Human Psychology, Human Mental Growth, Biological Growth.

Introduction

There are holistic approaches to defining ageing. Some define it from a biological perspective, some consider it an essence of psychology, and some think of it as a social process and so on (Dziechciaz, 2014). However, majorly it is cited as a biological phenomenon as while tempted to be defined it is revealed that it is a 'physiological process' (Bodey, Bodey, Siegel, and Kaiser, 1997). Human ageing

is also considered a dynamic and ‘irreversible process.’ (Galkin, Zhang, Dmitriev, and Gladyshev, 2019). From a development perspective, it is conceptualized as a ‘development phenomenon of human beings’ for the duration of time (Schreck, 2014). There are reflective features of ageing among humans which directly signify the process of ageing. Ageing is considered a ‘universal phenomenon’ in the lives of humans (Harman, 2006). ‘The biologist derived the idea of ageing that this process initiates in the fourth decade of human life and ends with the death that is the demise of biological life’ (Dziechciaz, 2014).

Ageing is not simple but a complex whole comprising of continuous variations in social, biological, and psychological characteristics of humans. In terms of biological perspectives, the contributors to the ageing process include human’s improper nutrition. Henceforth, ‘ageing has a direct relation with nutrient deficiencies’ (Raman, 2017). ‘The psychomotor loads, physical inactivity, and chronic and acute health conditions’ also play a key role in boosting the ageing process (Dziechciaz, 2014). Also, the biological agents are accompanied by psychosocial changes such as environmental changes, lack of preparation for old age, human ‘loneliness’, ‘fear’, and isolation (Ross, Jennings, and William, 2017). While turning towards old age which is the direct component of the experimental question of this study, can be defined as a final stage of the ageing process leading to death. ‘Ageing is a resultant product of a gradual loosening of mental and physical capabilities with a growing risk of death’ (WHO, 2015). ‘Moreover, many physicians and biologists have cited it as the phase of life that begins with the age of maturity’ (Dziechciaz, 2014). The age of maturity signifies the weakening of bodily functions and slight and massive alterations in the bodily system encompassing several organs. Whilst depicting a clearer portrayal of ageing, the following element defines ageing in several domains:

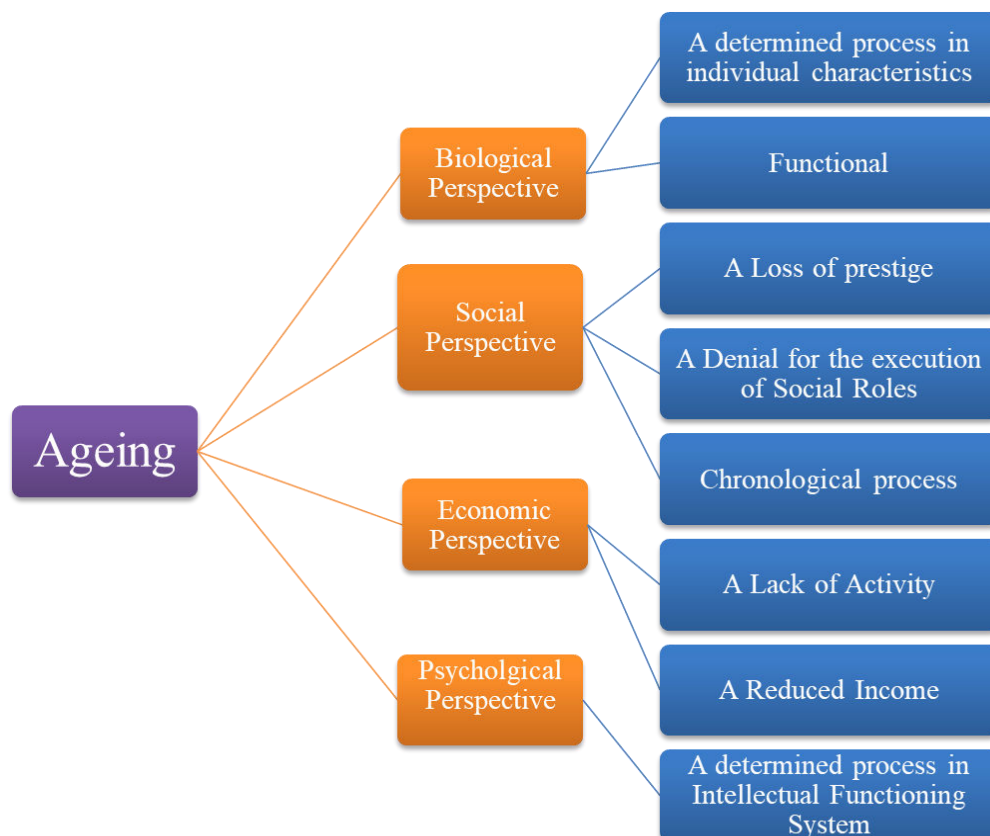


Figure 1: Perspectives of Ageing

The above figures illustrate the process of ageing in multiple dimensions derived from various domains. There are several definitions of old age and the ageing process. However, the above figure just took a few important reviews of different areas. Nonetheless, old age cannot be defined in a single

dimension, and is difficult to define it by using multi-dimensions and fields in one go. Usually, with the use of the so-called calendar people used to determine the age of humans. 'Earth's calendar year clearly give the estimation of human's age who is a specie of earth' (Hitch, 2016). However, there is no recognized threshold of old age at the universal level or 'no universal biomarkers to trace the old age' (Rehkopf, Rosero-Bixby, and Dow, 2016). Nonetheless, the process of human ageing is an individualized process, and the old age of humans is not easy to be determined. Henceforth, it could be plainly stated that the tool constructed for measuring the beginning of old age is named the so-called calendar. 'One renowned German Psychologist named L. Aschoffa has quoted that the phenomenon of ageing begins when a human being enters the age of 45. Likewise, the age of 80 is considered to be the phase of ageing as proven by Russian gerontology, 60 is declared by WHO (World Health Organization), while 65 by the UN (United Nations) and UK (United Kingdom). As per the WHO report, old age is divided into three different phases i.e. given as:

- 1- Ageing- Young Old (Early Old age)
This division entails humans of having aged sixty to seventy-four (60-74).
- 2- Old –old (Old-age)
This section comprises the age of humans between seventy-five to ninety years (75-90).
- 3- Longevity (Long-Lived)
This class encompasses humans of age ninety years and above (>90)' (Dziechciaz, 2014).

The objective of this study is to define the old age from the perspectives of social media community. The research has taken in the social media community as a target to acquire them as key respondents' group and define the ageing process in their own spectacles of beliefs and norms. However, the study also aims to identify the old age and the social, physical, and biological changes emerging as a consequence of ageing.

Review of Literature

Bartke (2021) has defined ageing as one of the natural processes of 'biological change in metabolism' and 'physiochemical processes in an irreversible way' and enhanced with the rise of age. Cakala-Jakimowicz, Kolodziej-Wojnar, and Puzianowska-Kuznicka (2021) were of the view that this process leads to induce changes in the properties of cells that result in the impairment in structural and functional changes, self-regulation, and regeneration in tissues and organ systems. There are many biological changes that took place in human body with the onset of ageing. Bonaldo and Sandri (2013) had highlighted the effect of ageing on biological attributes and has cited 'atrophy' as a structural and biological change prompted in the cells, tissues, and organs in a slow manner' leading to the ultimate death of the human body. Carroll & Kitzmann (2013) has also elaborated on one of the effects of ageing on biological system of human being as Polymorphic Amyloid Degeneration (The degeneration process taking place in the organs where amyloid is deposited). Terman and Brunk (1998) had found Lipofuscin rise as a factor to determine the onset of ageing. The rise of lipofuscin come up as a biological change occurring in the medium of cells called cytoplasm which encloses many pigments including pigment lipofuscin which is also termed to be the 'senile pigment'.

Hooper, Bunn, Jimoh, and Fairweather (2014) were of the view that ageing accompanies with external and internal cell dehydration. Gordon Betts (2012) revealed that the dehydration process taking place in the 'cells lead to reducing the body fluids from 60% of the total body weight in younger people and adults. However, according to Dziechciaz (2014), dehydration due to ageing induces a reduction of body fluid in the elderly to about 45% of the total body weight. According to Marais (2014), with the onset of ageing process in human, there is obsessive increase in fat observed. Volpi, Nazemi, and Fujita (2004) had figured out one of the effects of the ageing as reduction of muscle tissues. Boyce and shone, 2006 had revealed that ageing leads to the impairment of the sense of smell in humans.

García-Piqueras (2019) had found changes in skin thickness and reductions in the number of sweat glands and ‘nerve endings’ as an effect of ageing. Wang (2020) was of the view that the impaired functioning of the skin permeability which is termed to be ‘epidermal dysfunction’ is a resultant factor of ageing. Reduced reactivity of the immune system to respond to wounds, inflammation, and others. ‘It is one of the significant impacts of ageing that changes human immunity and increases body susceptibility to contagious diseases and declines the level of effectiveness of vaccinations’ (Haynes, 2020).

Some of the adverse biological changes may sound as problematic for the healthy or successful living of mankind. Nonetheless, Annele, Satu, and Timo (2019) had revealed that it’s also a matter of fact that the ‘human body can live with successful biological ageing’ free from diseases, and the agents of old age accompany the man throughout his journey which tends to have a motive to slow down him in all the spheres of his life. But how? It’s a significant question that if answered has great turnarounds. Psychological ageing is a result of the effect of time on a human being’s personality along with his spiritual and emotional life. However, when someone tends to give light on the psychological ageing of human, it comes to know that this type of ageing determines how much a human is prepared and positioned for his old age. Psychological ageing is nurtured by the type of circumstances a human face throughout his life or the quality of the earlier life of man. Henceforth, this type of ageing takes over time. LCSW (2021) has quoted that psychological ageing take part in setting up the mood swings. Schaie and Willis (2010) have found psychological ageing a key factor in playing a significant role in bringing forth the attitudinal changes in human personalities. Marcum (2013) is of the view that with ageing man is found inclined towards social activities.

Dziechciaz (2014) has linked mental ageing with mental growth and thought processes. He referred to it as human consciousness and turned-out characteristics to adapt to the changes occurring with the ageing process. There are positive and negative results of ageing that are induced in humans with the ageing process and may include the feeling of happiness and inner contention, constructive attitude, harmonious interactions with other humans, memory deterioration (Especially short-term memory), strengthened retrospective thinking (A capability to recall the most older event of life), a prepared mind for sudden illness, death, or life changes, a practical mind for the avoidance of mistakes, enhanced spirituality, development of retention for cultural, moral, religious and spiritual values’ characterized by acceptance of old age. The negative consequences of ageing include the hostile attitude toward the world and own self (characterized by the quality of the human lifestyle).

Nikitin, Burgermeister, & Freund (2012) have illustrated that ‘ageing plays an important role in adopting social behaviors and influencing social experiences by humans. Social ageing is one of the types of ageing that refers to the period in which how a person acknowledges his ageing and executes his role in society in relation to his ageing process. Every human must enter old age with a distinctive vision. This vision is usually constructed by his own social interactions that took place throughout his life and the experience he had made while pursuing his social life activities including the experiences, he gained from the different types of old people he had interacted with during his lifespan. Nonetheless, the individual develops the most dominant either positive or negative old age behavior with which he has interacted the most. In the current era, the old age or elderly have to face challenges for being active and taking part in decision makings for their families because of the highly motivated, developed, and efficient youth of our society which pays less attention to the elderlies and let them feel degraded which ultimately led them to boosted psychological ageing accompanied with depression, environmental indifference, and apathy.

Whilst narrating about the highly developed societies, it is prevalently observed that the people of these societies have enough attempts or practices to endorse the possibilities for the retention of their social functions. Such as by keeping themselves associated with a diverse range of networks and

continuing with their self-interests as well as hobbies or passions they have in their lives. Likewise, the report of the UN (2007) declared that all ‘societies should work to make assurance of people belonging to all ages have equal means of support required for a decent kind of living’. The collective determination of psychological, biological, and social ageing is reflected by the Bio-psycho-social facets of human ageing. These facets are reflected by two-man divisions that are formal and informal where formal division signifies human activities including politics, associations, and volunteering, and informal includes interactions with family and friends. The active type of ageing is the best one and is usually observed among old age individuals who have solidified connections with their family, friends, neighbors, and relatives that lead them to the acquisition of usefulness and prestige. The old age individuals always seek a pure and natural environment that inclines them towards spirituality and give them material support. It is declared by many gerontologists that half of the percentage of health is fulfilled by the self-activity of a human being that refrains negative impact of ageing.

Furthermore, Dziechciaz (2014) has cited one of the great scholars named Kołataj and revealed that he has defined old age as the period which entails a great ‘accumulation of experiences and a number of social opportunities. In old age, many individuals representing them as seniors can benefit the juniors accompanying them in different spheres of life. However, it entirely depends on the earlier lifestyle pursued by the seniors. It is also a belief and common opinion of people of our society that the old age individual can remain active and involved in social activities if he has remained an active personality in his youth.

Methodology

The research methodology has been chosen as narrative analysis with respect to the experimental question designed for this study. Narrative analysis is a kind of analysis which has its own origins in the theories of literature. It has a significant association with the studies conducted with in the domains of media, culture, society and many others. Henceforth, many social scientists have developed an interest to pursue with narrative analysis for the accomplishments of their research studies. Nonetheless, narrative analysis is a significant means to develop deep understanding about the social world and for the assemblage of useful data (Earthy and Cronin, 2008).

Narrative analysis has helped the researcher to represent the results of the study in a more comprehensible way. Research-based on narrative analysis is always found valuable by many social scientists. It helps them a lot in analyzing their concepts and theories. Narrative analysis has been always found a multifaceted approach and a thorough method. It positions the researcher to draw a clearer portrayal of the subject of study with insightful narratives that make the deepest understanding to the target audience of study. It is often characterized by the most significant feature that centers it namely storytelling. This type of analysis with its multifaceted nature can be employed in different ways depending on the nature of the research and objectives. The researcher while pursuing with this chosen methodology has firstly chosen the platform through which he could be able to acquire the responses to the experimental question.

The researcher has constructed the research strategy for the acquisition of data by designing an attention-grabbing social media post inquiring about the objective addressing the experimental question that is “how do you define ageing?” with a key description and purpose of study and then posting it in three different channels i.e., Facebook, twitter, Instagram. He has set the time frame of seven days and set the post in public mode. The retrieved responses were filtered systematically with the help of the designed set of order by researcher to have the most relevant findings to the topic and objective of research study. The set of seventy-three responses have been got finalized and studied for further derivation of themes in data refinery process.

Sr#	Steps executed for narrative analysis	Application of each step in Research Study
1-	The research question and objectives	<p>Research Question: How do you define ageing?</p> <p>Research Objective: How social media community define old age?</p>
2-	Acquisition of Respondents	73 of the target respondents belonging to different countries in the world are accessed from three social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.
3-	Evaluating collected Responses	73 of the sourced responses are evaluated for drawing themes.
4-	Analysis, summarization, and narratives synthesis	All the derived themes are studied with respect to the responses of target respondents and compared to existing literature to summarize the results as per the research question
5-	Interpretations	Generating Findings

Table 1: Execution of Step-by-step Procedure of Narrative Analysis

After the data has been got collected by researcher and he had come to decide for designing certain themes with respect to acquired data type. He derived the themes by getting inclined towards reading the responses, analyzing them, and then generating the themes. At the last, he worked to figure out the themes and the relevant narratives derived for them through responses of the subjects of study and then constructed a narrative analysis.

Results and Discussions

This section of the research study will give light on the nature of the data retrieved from the sources, the themes derived from the narratives of respondents, and the analysis of findings administered by the researcher while opting with the research methodology as narrative analysis.

Themes	Countries of Respondents
Ageing as Human Social Growth	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Katmandu, Nepal 2. Stockton, California 3. Berlin, Germany 4. Sirohi, India

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Mexico City, Mexico, 6. Portsmouth, UK 7. Prachuap Khiri Khan 8. Thailand 9. Bhavnagar, India 10. Soul City, North Carolina 11. Port Harcourt, Nigeria 12. Australia, La Crosse, Wisconsin, USA
Ageing as a Human Mental Progress	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brooklyn, New York, 2. Concord, California, 3. Mexico City, Mexico, 4. Pahoia, Hawaii, 5. North Versailles, Pennsylvania, 6. Colorado Springs, Colorado, 7. Naples, Florida, Sidney, 8. British Columbia, 9. Newcastle, New South Wales, 10. Bronx, New York
Ageing as a Biological change in Human	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leeds, 2. Perth, Western Australia, 3. Austin, Texas, 4. Pahoia, Hawaii, 5. Sirohi, India, 6. USA, 7. Austin, Texas, 8. Mount Bethel, Pennsylvania, 9. Tulsa, Oklahoma, 10. NG, 11. Siliguri, India, 12. Lancaster, Ohio USA, 13. Singapore, 14. Bitburg, Germany
Ageing as Human Psychological Positioning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bristol, United Kingdom, 2. Portsmouth, UK 3. London, United Kingdom 4. Cooma, New South Wales, 5. Kansas City, Kansas, 6. Africa, Rose Hill, Mauritius

Table 2: Origin of Respondents and major Themes

Findings and Analysis

This section encompasses the analysis of data retrieved from the respondents of the study from various countries on the experimental question that mainly addresses ageing. The few of the themes

are derived from the evaluation of data given in the table. According to each theme, the narratives are categorized and are analyzed as below:

Ageing as Human Social Growth

Ageing as a human social growth is derived as a main theme from various narratives of the respondents belonging to 12 different regions namely Katmandu, Nepal, Stockton, California, Berlin, Germany, Sirohi, India, Mexico City, Mexico, Portsmouth, UK, Prachuap Khiri Khan, Thailand, Bhavnagar, India, Soul City, North Carolina, Port Harcourt, Nigeria, Australia, La Crosse, Wisconsin, USA. All the narratives of the respondents under this thematic category are analyzed and showed the distinct features of ageing. From the analysis of 1st theme; Ageing as Human Social Growth, it is revealed that ageing is a 'discovery' which tends to signify it as a discovery of new things, knowledge etc. It is also considered as a 'recovery' which implies to get it understand that by social growth and development, the human refines and recovers himself with ageing. One of the respondents quoted it as time attachment which directly narrates ageing as time related phenomenon. With time and accumulation of experiences, ageing precedes. Ageing is feeling of getting freer and available that is not socially liked as the mind has get grown and developed whereas it is too hard for the body to use the wisdom in the social spheres, physically. A respondent quoted ageing as,

“Something I don’t like. My mind is growing, and my body is dying but I guess it’s progression if you think about it.”

Ageing is also revealed as beautiful journey accompanying great changes. There is a secret somewhere embedded that most people have, and they never get age at all. In this respect, a respondent has narrated:

“Graceful and beautiful. Some don’t get to age at all”.

Ageing is against the immortality. One of the respondents has used unique metaphor for ageing that is wine. His narrative tends to imply that ageing is like the turning of wine into better form or bitter form like vinegar. Ageing is a cycle of outer human body. Some respondents have a very positive assumptions about ageing, and they consider it as peaceful and source of happiness. Another respondent, it is the source of pain and pains only intermingling his social sphere of life. Ageing is linked to the physical parts of life and human body. One of the respondents has narrated ageing as a period when human change his orientation for finding pleasure as quoted:

“I define it best like this. We don’t stop playing games having fun because we get older. We get older cause we stop playing games a having fun. Time is man-made. I don’t say middle aged cause that means your halfway done!!”

Ageing as a Human Mental Progress

As per the above theme, respondents belonging to 10 different regions namely Katmandu, Nepal, Stockton, California, Berlin, Germany, Sirohi, India, Mexico City, Mexico, Portsmouth, UK, Prachuap Khiri Khan, Thailand, Bhavnagar, India, Soul City, North Carolina, Port Harcourt, Nigeria, Australia, La Crosse, Wisconsin, USA, Brooklyn, New York, Concord, California, Mexico City, Mexico, Pahoia, Hawaii, North Versailles, Pennsylvania, Colorado Springs, Colorado, Naples, Florida, Sidney, British Columbia, Newcastle, New South Wales and Bronx, New York have depicted a very clear view of ageing by relating it with a human mental progress. According to their views, ageing precedes when wisdom knowledge and experience grows. Moreover, ageing is reflected with a distinct state of mind for each individual. Ageing is the mental growth with sourcing all knowledge if preceded properly. It makes the man wiser with full of knowledge, wisdom, experiences, and

maturity. One of the respondents quoted it as growing awareness with respect to the life cycle of man such as:

“A natural part of the cycle of life and a growing awareness of it.”

It is also narrated as a discovery of one-self. Ageing is just like a story is going on. The more stages of life, the human pass, the lengthier a story develops for a human. The respondent quoted:

“Ageing is a compliment of life. The more pages we turn the bigger the story we leave behind.”

There are some tricks to make the ageing successful. One of that tricks is to learn from the mistakes with time and experiences and avoid them in future for becoming happier and wiser. Ageing with its distinct feature creates a unique story of everyone.

Ageing as Human Psychological Positioning

For the theme derived as ageing a Human Psychological Positioning, a great number of responses are retrieved which narrates a psychological dimension of ageing. Human develops a psychological thinking and believes that his soul is immortal and have no connection with ageing process. Ageing is linked to body alone. Ageing is a gradual process of leaving the planet by humans while pursuing with excess number of opportunities to get aware and prepare for the life after death. The psychological positioning of human mental progress is clearly depicted from one of the responses of a respondent that shows that with age human's psychology make him to care less about the foolish thoughts. It is important for the human to never let his ageing process influence his psychology in negative way. One of the respondents stated the reality of ageing human in a very distinctive manner as

“We have lost our Spiritual knowledge, intelligence, and ability to manipulate the natural energies around us, and internally, now we are subject to the adverse environs we, ourselves created including the physical Disease of our own physical bodies. Humans need to wake up from their own vulnerabilities, it takes hard work but our survival as a species depends on it! We must regain what we have lost, for we are a Species living with Spiritual, technological and Archaeological Amnesia. As this Holographic world once again begins its ascendancy from the Kali-Yuga 3D to Dwapara 4d/5D, we will once again feel the spiritual aspirations to begin again, our climb to the light of the infinite one and our lower Harmonic physical bodies will start to once again, live longer.”

Human psychology desires to have ageing leading death with peace and love. Ageing is an inevitable truth and is a sign that how longer or shorter the human can survive in the upcoming time. In the same aspect, the respondent has quoted:

“Ageing, in my perspective, is an acute awareness and recognition of one's mortality and what to do with this inevitable truth. Process of losing sense of belonging, memory and approaching death. The final stage of life or recalling what you did whether good or bad and feeling good or bad about it.”

Ageing is considered the inner age of the kid lying inside the human. A unique characteristic of ageing is that it could be reversed on some certain conditions. For one of the respondents, ageing depends on the motion of human. If he moves to and from for betterment, he ultimately never get effected by ageing and vice versa. In this respect, the quoted words entail:

“I think it’s about movement as your constant. If you’re in motion, you won’t be affected by age. When you sleep lucid your mind moves the soul. I think if the intention to movement is rest it would reverse the outcome.”

Ageing as a Biological Change in Human

Under this thematic category, highest number of responses from Leeds, Perth, Western Australia, Austin, Texas, Pahoa, Hawaii, Sirohi, India, USA, Austin, Texas, Mount Bethel, Pennsylvania, Tulsa, Oklahoma, NG, Siliguri, India, Lancaster, Ohio USA, Singapore, Bit burg, Germany are evaluated which consider the ageing process a resultant of biological ageing. Many signs of ageing were revealed by the respondents that exposed that ageing precedes wit atrophy, cellular decomposition, skin loosening and wrinkles formation, lost body elasticity, slowed respiration, rise of oxidative stress, rising dehydration, A gradual break down of biological make up, shortened telomeres, Impairment in DNA repairing process in human body cells, Mutations in Genetic makeup, Reduced energies in tissues for taking part in metabolism, Lowering of pigments which also lead to turning of Black hairs to grey and enhanced sensitivity of immune system to catch diseases. Moreover, it is also revealed from two of the respondents respectively which tempts to give a new sense of thought.

“Ageing is a self-disruptive activity, exhibited by all living being in the world. With the passage of time the tissues are extensively becoming less energetic as normal metabolic process. It cannot function with max efficiency as in youth. However, with exercise and proper food habits one can maintain a better and longer working life above 100 years.”

Conclusions

The research findings had portrayed the term ageing in multiple dimensions. A significant conclusion has been drawn from the above findings that ageing has multi-access. No one can use a single dimension to define it, however it can be seen with multiple spectacles with every one’s own believes and values. Ageing is found as human growth in social, psychological, and biological spheres of life. The respondents accessed through social media platforms used worldwide have defined the term ageing with their own spectacles of beliefs. The highest number of respondents belonging to different countries have contributed to define the ageing as a process in biological perspectives. Then after the greatest ratio of respondents defined ageing in social growth perspectives, then after it, mostly considered as a mental progress and comparatively a smaller number of people defined it in psychological growth perspectives. Henceforth, the vote of ageing to be a biological, social, psychological or mental process is represented as

biological phenomena > Social Phenomena > Mental Process > Psychological Process.

Nonetheless, ageing of a human being is a complex process that proceeds in all the spheres of human life whether it is biological, social, political, psychological, or any other. It took place among humans while accompanying the inevitable changes taking place in the human body. Biological ageing is recognized by adverse changes taking place in the human body such as the functional or mechanical changes in the organ system of the body. Psychological ageing is characterized by significant changes in cognitive responses and memory retention capabilities. It is also identified among humans who have a higher probability of developing confusion, anxiety, and depression. Nonetheless, when social ageing is addressed, it came to be known that the beginning of social ageing can be recognized as losing the capabilities to continue with the social roles the people had in their earlier lives, liquification of the solidified social connectivity or relations and induction of feelings of solitary and loneliness. The only solution, predominantly observed by concluding with the results and findings of

the study for the betterment of psycho-social functioning in old age humans is to develop the acceptance of life, its circumstances, and activities.

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