

## A Critical Analysis Of India's Elderly People Status: A Historical Synopsis

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### ABSTRACT

The study discussed the various facets of ageing in the Indian context and various approaches to the treatment and care of the elderly worldwide brought into consideration and compared. Throughout the life cycle and across all cultures, demography and social expectations play a critical role in the ageing on primarily affecting the social productive capacities status position of these elder citizens.

The study analyses the role of elderly people throughout history and culture, comparing cultures of different countries, including Indians, Americans, Japanese, Chinese and those of other nations. This study offers a systematic literature review to understand how social, religious and legislative factors cut across and influence the lives of ageing people.

The elderly in India have been valued traditionally in the context of family with help from religion towards intergenerational care. Forced, the studies reveal the Hindu concern with duty to the parents, the Islamic respect for aged people and parental care, the Christian guidance concerning the treatment of elders. In the same way, traditions from Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism, ethics for Elderly people and children have values of compassion and respect for the elderly.

Nevertheless, the study reveals that twenty-first-century issues, including elder abuse and neglect and inadequate social services, cultural and religious values still exist and have emerged from shifting family structures and increased urbanization. Consequently, the study eulogises for comprehensive anti-geriatric legislation and a cultural revival to respect and protect the rights of the elderly.

By embracing historical, religious, and legislative paradigms for gerontology, the study calls for an intergenerational inclusiveness and social justice-centered approach toward the challenges of gerontological importance, which are viewed as a contemporary global concern.

**KEYWORDS:** Ageing Population, Elderly Care, Intergenerational Relationships, Cultural Perspectives on Ageing, Elder Abuse, Social Welfare for Elders

### 1. INTRODUCTION:

The phenomenon of ageing is an intrinsic and ubiquitous event that manifests in the existence of every individual. Elderly individuals, often aged 60 and above, commonly known as senior citizens, often experience a decline in economic productivity and an increased dependence on their children for various forms of support, including social, economic, and health-related assistance<sup>1</sup>. The phenomenon of ageing demonstrates significant variation among individuals. Some persons in their later stages of life display a tendency to maintain their physical and cognitive involvement, thus showcasing their capacity to make ongoing contributions to the workforce as they age. Nevertheless, it functions as an aberration within the accepted paradigm. The phase of ageing is commonly perceived as the ultimate and esteemed

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<sup>1</sup> T.C. Camacho et al., 'Functional Ability in the Oldest Old', *Journal of Aging and Health*, 5(4), 1993, p.439-454.

period of life, wherein individuals are liberated from familial responsibilities and are bestowed with abundant spare time by a higher authority to interact with their progeny and descendants<sup>2</sup>.

Age is a pivotal determinant in the allocation of social standing and functions as a vital aspect that regulates social exchanges across all societies. Within the context of this cultural framework, diligent parents exhibit careful attention to the well-being of their children, delivering education with a profound sense of earnestness, and fostering their socialisation in order to cultivate self-sufficiency, so enabling them to provide assistance to their parents in their later years. As these individuals transition into parenthood, they perpetuate this process of socialisation and maintain comparable expectations for their own children. Therefore, it is imperative to develop a state of mutual reciprocity between the elderly and the young in order to guarantee a stable and harmonious coexistence, as well as the calm appreciation of the invaluable blessing of life granted to them by a higher authority<sup>3</sup>.

### 1.1 DEFINITION OF AGEING

Tibbitts posits that the phenomenon of ageing might be comprehended as the ongoing presence of an expanding demographic group comprising persons who have successfully performed the customary obligations linked to maturity, such as securing financial sustenance and rearing offspring. In addition, the time following the completion of these responsibilities is considered to be a continuation of an individual's lifespan<sup>4</sup>.

Hess posits that the process of ageing is distinguished by its inherent inevitability and irreversibility, being a biological reality that manifests itself continuously over the course of an individual's lifespan<sup>5</sup>.

Handler defines ageing as the gradual deterioration of a mature organism resulting from time-dependent and permanent alterations that are intrinsic to all members of a given species. Over the course of time, these alterations progressively diminish the capacity of individuals to effectively acclimatise to environmental pressures, hence augmenting the probability of mortality<sup>6</sup>.

According to Jarry & Jarry (as cited in the Collins dictionary of sociology), the concept of ageing can be characterised as the sequential advancement of physical maturation throughout time. Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that the phenomenon of ageing encompasses a social dimension, wherein the significance attributed to this process holds greater relevance than the mere progression of time. The individual experience of ageing is influenced by socially created distinctions that arise from variations in cultural values and societal expectations, which are contingent upon gender and age group<sup>7</sup>.

Muttagi has presented a thorough explanation of ageing as a multifaceted process. It is imperative to acknowledge that the demographic notion of ageing diverges from the biological phenomenon of ageing. The latter entails ongoing and dynamic alterations in chronological age, which may not necessarily correspond to physiological and psychological age<sup>8</sup>. Furthermore, Muttagi (2019) asserts that the process of ageing is frequently connected with symptoms such as fatigue, a deterioration in the operational capabilities of physical organs, and a diminished capability to adequately cope with the stressors associated with disease or injury.

Bhatia asserts that within each civilization, there exists a distinct conceptualization of the process of ageing and the manner in which various age cohorts are classified. The transmission of this understanding occurs via the process of socialisation, which serves to facilitate the intergenerational transfer of social and cultural values. As individuals traverse several stages of life, they assume more responsibilities and positions in alignment with the prevailing norms and customs

<sup>2</sup> W.C. Cockerhanm, *This Aging Society*, (1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1997).

<sup>3</sup> B.L. Neogarten et al., *Age Norms, Age Constraints and Adult Socialization*, (J.S. Auadagro ed., 1980)

<sup>4</sup> R.P. Mohanty, *Ageing and The Aged: An Overview* (A.K. Kapoor and Satwanti Kapoor ed., 2004)

<sup>5</sup> id

<sup>6</sup> Id

<sup>7</sup> Id At.62-64

<sup>8</sup> ibid

of their society. Age-related roles, privileges, and expectations are defined by society. Social ageing, which is distinct from biological and psychological ageing, pertains to the phase in an individual's lifespan that is collectively recognised as old age. Based on the aforementioned definitions, it may be inferred that the process of ageing is inherent, unavoidable, and permanent. The phenomenon is distinguished by the decline of a fully developed organism as the eventual result<sup>9</sup>.

## 1.2. THE HISTORICAL STATUS OF ELDERLY PEOPLE

The portrayal of elderly individuals in many countries has become a prevalent and worldwide phenomenon. The concept of society, specifically in relation to its level of simplicity or complexity, has been a focal point of inquiry within the discipline of social anthropology. In various cultural contexts, elder adults are often esteemed for their mature age, since it is believed to symbolise the acquisition of significant experiential knowledge and practical skills that are crucial for survival. Numerous studies have demonstrated

The examination of the progression of ageing across diverse societies is essential for comprehending this phenomena. According to Professor Dicey, there exists a prevailing or dominating ideology during a certain era, which encompasses a range of views, convictions, sentiments, principles, and deeply ingrained biases. The dominant paradigm of thinking has a discernible influence, whether direct or indirect, on the legislative process.

### 1.2.1. The Social Status Elderly in American Society:

The historical depiction of elderly individuals in the United States has a level of intricacy and variety that is sometimes underestimated. The formulation of these historical narratives has been notably shaped by the endeavour to achieve economic stability. In the pre-industrial era of America's agrarian economy, a minority of individuals were able to amass sufficient riches to support themselves in their older years, while the majority of senior adults either continued to work or faced a state of abject reliance. The key factor contributing to the transfer of an older family member to a financially struggling facility was primarily ascribed to the family members' lack of motivation or ability to provide support. The rise in the number of for-profit nursing homes, resulting in a decrease in the prevalence of non-profit and government-operated facilities, can be traced to the implementation of Medicare and Medicaid legislation. However, notable deficiencies were observed in the delivery of healthcare services, which therefore prompted the need for additional federal legislation.

### 1.2.2. The Social Status Elderly in Japan Society:

In the year 2003, Japan garnered acknowledgment for its status as a country renowned for its elevated life expectancy. The life expectancy for females in Japan was documented to be 85.23 years, whereas boys in Japan had a life expectancy of 78.32 years<sup>10</sup>. The occurrence of individuals reaching the age of one hundred or older has witnessed a significant increase over a period of four decades, surging from a count of 153 individuals in the year 1963 to an astonishing total over 20,000 in the year 2003. While the observed increase in life expectancy is indeed remarkable, it does not inherently guarantee a commensurate improvement in the quality of life during one's later years. It is conceivable for humans to attain a centenarian age or beyond it, despite enduring prolonged periods of bedridden confinement resulting from chronic illness. The prospect of enhanced lifespan gives rise to significant deliberations concerning the quality of life experienced throughout this prolonged duration. The advancements in medical technology have played a crucial role in the notable extension of human lifespan. Japan exhibits a remarkable longevity rate, leading to a consequential prevalence of old adults among its demographic composition. In the context of a nation possessing a diverse and extensive cultural legacy, numerous customs and traditions are observed that specifically pertain to the manner in which elderly folks lead their lives.

### 1.2.3 The Social Status Elderly in China Society:

In the old communities of China, there existed a lack of equality among individuals. It was expected that young individuals would demonstrate reverence towards their older counterparts. In traditional communities, there existed a

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<sup>9</sup> id

<sup>10</sup> Fukushi & Kourei, Health of Aged, The Asahi Shimbun Oct, 2003, at A1

customary practise wherein younger persons would exhibit deference towards their older counterparts and adhere to their instructions, thereby playing a role in the well-being of their familial group. In the realm of ageing, it becomes apparent that Chinese society demonstrated a robust devotion to traditional values and rituals. A widely held concept in the importance of the extended family unit, which includes current members, deceased ancestors, and future generations, was prevalent. The predecessors inhabited a distinct domain, depending on their offspring to provide them with nourishment and clothing. Without these crucial protections, the ancestors would manifest as spectral entities, so exposing their descendants to adversity and suffering. Over the course of the year, the family continually made offerings of food and clothing to their ancestors. A widely observed cultural phenomenon was the delegation of parental authority in arranging marriage partnerships for their children. During the prenuptial period, families would traditionally consult their ancestors to secure their approval of the chosen union. The clergy members undertook a comprehensive analysis of the birth dates of the female and male individuals with the objective of determining a propitious date for their wedding ceremony. Historically, when entering the institution of marriage, women have generally severed their connections with their birth families in order to assimilate into their husband's familial structure. It was customary for young married couples to adhere to the expectations and wishes of their older family members.

Chinese society underwent a sudden and significant transformation. The initiation of communism in China signified the initiation of endeavours by the communist party to construct a society devoid of social classes, characterised by egalitarianism among all persons. The government achieved the goal of promoting equality by enacting legislation that effectively outlawed the holding of private property. The underlying objective was to ensure that education, healthcare, housing, and work possibilities were designed to be fair and easily attainable for every individual. The Communist ideology lays its trust in the younger generation through its advocacy for a departure from existing conventions that prioritise deference towards elder individuals. Attempts were undertaken to eliminate the enduring practise of venerating ancestors. The imposition of a prohibition by government officials has resulted in the prevention of families from engaging in conventional funeral customs and offering tributes to their ancestors. Moreover, the act of possessing a documented record of one's ancestry is considered to be an offence that is subject to punishment. However, despite the considerable changes taking place in China, the reverence for older generations and the preservation of traditional customs have remained intact, particularly in rural areas. In 1950, the Chinese government implemented a marriage regulation with the intention of fostering the notion of marital liberty. The obligatory nature of young adults adhering to their parents' selection of a marriage partner was non-existent.

Presently, there exists a discernible decline in the degree of reverence and consideration accorded to elderly folks within the Chinese society. Similar to other countries, China is currently facing societal issues due to a significant increase in its senior population. The demographic phenomenon of population ageing in China poses a wide range of social and economic complexities. China has established a target to develop a comprehensive network of services for the elderly, which includes social endowment assurance and carer services, by the year 2010. A substantial majority, surpassing 70%, of elderly adults receive financial assistance and caregiving from their families, whereas a small proportion, less than 17%, derive benefits from pension schemes. Around 70% of elderly adults mostly inhabit rural areas and substantially depend on support from their adult children due to the lack of an inclusive social welfare system specifically designed for rural communities. A considerable segment of the older demographic, precisely 25.8%, comprises persons who are either childless or do not cohabit with their offspring. The prevalence percentage in Beijing is recorded at 34%. The extent of their dependence is wholly determined by the prevailing social circumstances. A sensible strategy for China to tackle the issues arising from its ageing population would involve the integration of familial support alongside the implementation of a novel pension system. Prominent scholars in the fields of social science and history have consistently argued that the veneration of elderly folks in Chinese society represents a deeply ingrained cultural norm that should be upheld and preserved.

1.2.4. The Social Status Elderly in Indian Society:

The social fabric and cultural framework of India are characterised by the prominent concept of 'Unity in Diversity'<sup>11</sup>. India is widely recognised for its vast cultural heritage, characterised by a historical timeline that surpasses 5000 years and comprises some of the most ancient civilizations known to humanity. The Indian society is distinguished by a complex structure, encompassing a range of regulated values and principles. Moreover, India encompasses a diverse array of religious communities, including but not limited to Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, and Christianity, each characterised by its unique set of beliefs and principles<sup>12</sup>. Furthermore, within the confines of the aforementioned constitutional structure, there are a multitude of distinct cultures and societal factions that subscribe to varying sets of beliefs and engage in unique rituals.

#### 1.2.4.1. The Impact of Religion on the Ageing Population

Religion exerts a substantial impact on persons' consciousness and exerts a big influence on several aspects of their lives. Every religious tradition encompasses a distinct collection of concepts and beliefs pertaining to the person, family, and community. The phenomenon of ageing inherently encompasses qualities like dignity and respect. Certain persons possess the capacity to approach the trials of the ageing process with elegance and serenity, whereas others perceive old age as a disconcerting ordeal and confront it with resistance and melancholy. The presence of elderly folks is regarded as either a source of blessings or a burden, depending on individual perspectives. In order to comprehensively comprehend the capabilities of the senior population, it is imperative to engage in the interpretation of religious literature. The profound and ethical implications of this stage of life can only be comprehended when viewed from this particular perspective.

#### 1.2.4.2 The Provision of Care for the Elderly in the Context of Hinduism

Hindu households exhibit a cohesive structure based on a collective system of beliefs and obligations. The importance of familial connections in Hindu matrimonial unions stems from the recognition that spouses do not embark on a partnership solely as autonomous people, but rather as integral participants within a familial structure, thereby assuming a shared obligation for the welfare of the entire family. The significance of this dedication to the family is notably heightened when seen from the perspective of religious belief, which places emphasis on everlasting bonds. The major responsibility of a householder within the Hindu faith is to fulfil the role of serving and providing support to the immediate family unit, encompassing the spouse, offspring, and parents. The notion of filial piety, which is profoundly rooted in the religious teachings of Hinduism, emphasises the responsibility of offspring to provide care and support for their elderly parents. Within the context of Hinduism, the joint family system has conventionally served as a refuge for the elderly during periods of vulnerability.

The often overlooked aspects of joint families are the responsibilities of the younger generation and the advantages enjoyed by the senior members. The elderly individuals were actively involved in every familial decision and held significant influence over the lives of the younger generation. The responsibility that an individual assumes towards their parents is of significant magnitude, to the extent that it is perpetual and cannot be relinquished. Parents play a crucial role in the lives of humans and should be considered as revered entities. Hinduism prescribes a tight adherence to the practise of demonstrating respect and reverence for ancestors through acts of homage and sacrificial rituals. Another means of demonstrating respect for the elderly is by perpetuating the family lineage through the act of procreation. According to the Vedas, it is incumbent upon householders to fulfil their obligations for the elderly both during their lifetime and after their demise, as well as to ensure the continuity of their family lineage through the act of procreation. In the context of Hinduism, parents hold a position of great reverence and are often regarded with a level of reverence comparable to that of deities. Failing to demonstrate reverence towards the elderly is considered a transgression and a serious offence. According to Hindu philosophical tenets, one of the most accessible paths to achieve Moksha, the

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<sup>11</sup> Tiwari SC, Pandey NM. The Indian concepts of lifestyle and mental health in old age. *Indian J Psychiatry*. 2013;55(Suppl 2):S288-S292. doi:10.4103/0019-5545.105553

<sup>12</sup> Id



ultimate liberation from the cycle of birth and death, involves the compassionate care and support provided to the elderly and the destitute.

a. The Manusmriti:

The Manusmriti, alternatively referred to as the 'Law of Manu' or 'Institutions of Manu', gained prominence as an important text in Hindu Law and ancient Indian civilization around 5000 B.C. The compilation under discussion, which was composed during a highly advanced period in Indian history, holds significant importance since it is regarded as a fundamental work falling within the genre of Smriti literature. More precisely, it is classified as one of the nineteen Dharmasastras<sup>13</sup>. The Manusmriti is presented as a didactic text in which Sage Manu imparts his wisdom to rishis who are in search of enlightenment regarding the subject matter at hand. Consisting of twelve distinct parts, the body of legislation comprises a comprehensive collection of 2,684 statutes. The article highlights the need of demonstrating respect and reverence towards older individuals, as it is considered to result in several advantages such as extended lifespan, enhanced wisdom, improved reputation, and better physical vitality (chapter II/121). Moreover, the Manusmriti provides guidance on the prohibition of disrespecting elderly folks (chapter IV/141) and emphasises the importance of refraining from engaging in confrontations with them (chapter IV/179 - 180). Moreover, the passage advocates for the regular veneration of senior Brahmanas who possess expertise in the Vedas and uphold moral purity. It is claimed that such reverence might elicit admiration even from Rakshasas, supernatural entities (chapter VII/38).

It is an insurmountable task for any individual to adequately compensate their parents, even over the course of a century, for the multitude of challenges they endure in the process of conceiving and nurturing their offspring until they reach maturity<sup>14</sup>. In his teachings, Manu elucidates the reasons behind the imperative of assigning significance to one's parents. Mothers have a significant role in our lives as they are responsible for giving birth to us, enduring considerable hardships to raise us, providing us with education, and assisting us in establishing stability in our lives. The significant contributions of their affection and diligent endeavours greatly contribute to our personal growth and achievements<sup>15</sup>. When individuals become parents themselves, their own parents assume a significant role in imparting positive values to their children. The act of regularly showing reverence and providing assistance to one's elders leads to an augmentation in one's lifespan, knowledge, reputation, and physical prowess<sup>16</sup>. Furthermore, individuals who genuinely serve their parents and teachers demonstrate a profound respect for the teachings encapsulated within various scriptural texts. Furthermore, individuals who exhibit contempt towards these entities will not get any benefits from engaging in acts of devotion<sup>17</sup>. Consequently, it is imperative that during their lifespan, individuals refrain from engaging in any other religious endeavours. Instead, it is advisable for him to persist in providing his services to them with utmost commitment, ensuring that his actions align with their preferences and contribute to their overall welfare<sup>18</sup>.

b. The Mahabharatha:

The Mahabharatha holds great significance as an epic within the realm of Hindu mythology. The Mahabharatha is an ancient Sanskrit epic in India, widely regarded as the longest of its kind. It is generally attributed to the sage Vyasa and is composed of one lakh slokas. The composition of the text can be traced back to the 4th century BCE or an earlier period. The Mahabharata is an epic narrative that recounts the tale of the Pandavas and Kauravas, who engage in a fierce struggle for the throne during the Kurukshetra war. The Mahabharata encompasses a wide range of themes and subjects,

<sup>13</sup> Griffith RT, editor. Chapter 36 Hymn 21 in the Textbook of White Yajurveda. 1899. p. 292. <http://www.sacred texts.com/hin/wyv/wyvb36.html>

<sup>14</sup> Buhler G, editor. Manusmriti: The laws of Manu, Chapter 6 Hymn 2. p. 34. [http://www.sanskritdocuments.org/all\\_pdf/manusmriti.pdf](http://www.sanskritdocuments.org/all_pdf/manusmriti.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> id

<sup>16</sup> id

<sup>17</sup> id

<sup>18</sup> Sodhi V, Goldsmith T. Rasayan herbs, sattvic food choices, and panchkarma therapies: Ayurvedic approaches to prevent and manage Alzheimer Disease. 2012 <http://www.VitalNutrient.net>. <http://ndnr>.

including moral teachings, philosophical discourse, devotional elements, theological concepts, discussions on statecraft, accounts of a significant civil conflict, and narratives depicting the lives of many individuals. The Mahabharata, an ancient Indian epic, encompasses the Bhagavad Gita, a sacred text in Hinduism. Within the narrative, Lord Krishna imparts his teachings to the warrior Arjuna amongst the backdrop of a battlefield. The Mahabharata provides a narrative that underscores the significance of morals and values in one's life. The Mahabharata contains several illustrations that depict the obligations of monarchs for the wellbeing of the aged, the importance of respecting elders in society, and the responsibilities of children towards their parents. Acharya Drona imparted the lesson of showing reverence for one's elders to his pupils, namely the Pandavas and Kauravas. Engaging in filial piety towards our parents is not only beneficial for our own development, but also yields significant advantages. On the contrary, neglecting to show concern for others can be considered as generating negative consequences in accordance with the concept of Karma. The efficacy of prayer is contingent upon an individual's commitment to fulfilling their obligations towards their parents and teachers. The Mahabharata features a narrative wherein a young Brahmana lad embarks on a spiritual journey, thereby forsaking his aged parents. The protagonist attains many spiritual abilities, although realises that a butcher who had simply demonstrated unwavering devotion to his elderly parents possessed a higher level of advancement in comparison. The Brahmana boy learned the lesson that 'serving one's parents yields a much greater reward than abandoning them and pursuing your own selfish goals'<sup>19</sup>. Yudhishtira while dealing with the Yaksha Prasna, a section of the Mahabharata, to the question "What is heavier than the Earth itself? The Yaksha, disguised as the lord of Dharma, presented a question to test the fidelity of the elder Pandava to truth. In response, the Pandava stated, "The mother holds greater significance than the Earth." This statement was not merely uttered, as the Pandava held deep concern for his mother Kunti, who had single-handedly raised the Pandavas after the demise of their father Pandu. During their period of exile, when Lord Krishna acted as their envoy to prevent a war between the cousins, Yudhishtira conveyed his respects to Kunti, who resided under the care of Vidura. With gratitude, he acknowledged that it was Kunti's devotion and penance that safeguarded the brothers from harm during various setbacks and threats to their lives. The epic 'Mahabharata' portrays the responsibilities and obligations associated with the four stages of life (ashrama dharma) that individuals are expected to adhere to.

#### c. The Ramayana:

The Ramayana holds great importance as a prominent piece of literature within Hindu mythology. This ancient epic is traditionally ascribed to the revered sage Valmiki. The Ramayana is an ancient Sanskrit epic of Hindu mythology, alongside the Mahabharata. The text in question, commonly referred to as Adikavya, was authored by the esteemed Hindu guru Valmiki. Both the Ramayana and the Mahabharata are considered as Hindu Itihasas, or epics. The text has approximately 24,000 verses and provides a narrative account of the life of Rama. This text delineates the responsibilities inherent in interpersonal connections and ethical principles, including the demonstration of reverence and affection towards one's family and elders, safeguarding the vulnerable, and embodying the qualities of an exemplary father, son, servant, brother, husband, and ruler. The epic narrative of the Ramayana serves as a compelling portrayal of the divine figure as an exemplar of reverence towards parents, elders, and teachers through his conduct. The fraternal relationship exhibited by Rama's brothers serves as an exemplary paradigm for all of humanity. Despite facing various challenges and upheavals, they resided in a state of harmony and cohesion. The maternal figure, Kaikeyi, harboured the intention of securing the throne of Ayodhya for her son, Bharata. However, it is worth noting that Bharata himself did not possess any inclination towards assuming such a position of power. The individual in question journeyed to the Chitrakoota mountain, whereupon they prostrated themselves before Rama and beseeched him to assume the throne of Ayodhya by virtue of his primogeniture<sup>20</sup>. However, Rama did not acquiesce to his entreaty. Citing the Vedic adage "Mathru Devo

<sup>19</sup> Vishal Agarwal, Ideals and Values/Duty of a Son or a Daughter towards Parents (2021)

[http://www.hindupedia.com/en/Ideals\\_and\\_Values/Duty\\_of\\_a\\_Son\\_or\\_a\\_Daughter\\_towards\\_Parents](http://www.hindupedia.com/en/Ideals_and_Values/Duty_of_a_Son_or_a_Daughter_towards_Parents)

<sup>20</sup> Bhagaban, Relevance Of Ramayana To Modern Life (1999) <http://www.saidarshan.org/baba/docs/d990325.html>,

Bhava, Pithru Devo Bhava," the speaker urged Bharata to adhere to his father's instructions and fulfil his mother's wishes by assuming the role of the ruler of Ayodhya. Rama made a commitment to provide him with comprehensive assistance and support. This is the reason why Rama is referred to as Sathyavak paripalaka, denoting his commitment to genuine communication. Rama made a conscious decision to endure a voluntary 14-year period of exile within a forested environment, with the primary objective of safeguarding the esteemed reputation of his father. The level of respect he demonstrated towards his father was noteworthy. Dashrath also harboured a profound affection for his offspring, to such an extent that upon Rama's departure to the jungle, Dashrath found himself unable to endure the prospect of being separated from his son for a span of 14 years, ultimately succumbing to death. This exemplifies the profound and unwavering love and respect that Rama harboured towards his parents. The individual in question diligently adhered to all directives issued by his parents, demonstrating a deep respect for their commitments and actively safeguarding their reputation against any allegations of inequity. Despite being the rightful heir, he adhered to his parents' desires and did not act in opposition to them. The individual in question demonstrated obedience towards his parents, resulting in his enduring remembrance and commemoration. Furthermore, it serves as a testament to the deep affection that parents hold for their offspring. It is anticipated that the circumstance of Dashrath's demise due to longing for his son will serve as an instructive lesson for children, fostering their understanding of the profound emotional bond that parents possess towards their offspring, so perhaps augmenting their appreciation for parental affection<sup>21</sup>.

The individual demonstrated a notable degree of dedication and steadfastness. Hindu families exhibit a strong basis of shared beliefs and obligations. The occurrence of conflicts within Hindu families can be attributed to the circumstance that couples enter into matrimonial unions not as autonomous individuals, but rather as members of a family who bear the collective responsibility for the welfare of the entire household. This dedication to the family unit becomes particularly profound when it is grounded in a belief system that encompasses the notion of everlasting devotion<sup>22</sup>.

#### 1.2.5 The Provision of Care for the Elderly in the Context of Islam

Islam is recognised as the second most widespread religion globally, following Christianity. Individuals who adhere to the Islamic faith are commonly referred to as Muslims. The origin of Islam is commonly attributed to the seventh century. Muslims adhere to the belief in monotheism, affirming the existence of a singular deity referred to as "Allah". This religion is widely regarded as a monotheistic faith. The propagation of the Islamic religion was carried out by Prophet Muhammad through his teachings in his capacity as the Messenger of God. The Quran is a religious text believed to have been authored by Allah, wherein the first person perspective is employed to convey divine messages through the intermediary of Gabriel to Muhammad. The composition comprises a total of 114 chapters, referred to as surahs<sup>23</sup>. Islam, as a religious tradition, also espouses the belief in an ultimate judgement, wherein individuals who have demonstrated righteousness will be granted entry into paradise, while those who have exhibited unrighteousness will face punishment in hell<sup>24</sup>.

The Quran comprehensively addresses all aspects of human existence, encompassing topics like as old age, and reverence for the elderly, and filial regard towards parents. The topic of old age is addressed in several Islamic writings, particularly in the Quran. It is imperative to accord elderly individuals with due respect, while also emphasising the significance of venerating Allah at their advanced years. According to the Holy Quran, it is stated that human beings are initially born in a state of vulnerability, and thereafter endowed with power after experiencing weakness. Subsequently, with the attainment of power, one is bestowed with weakness and a venerable head. In accordance with the scriptural text found in the Holy Quran, namely in al-Rum 30:54, it is said as follows: This implies that the human life cycle commences with

<sup>21</sup> Available at <http://www.schoolofindia.com/blackboard/moral-values-of-life-as-taught-in-indian-mythology/>, Last accessed on 20<sup>th</sup> January, 2023

<sup>22</sup> ibid

<sup>23</sup> Available at <https://www.history.com/topics/religion/islam>, Last accessed on 20<sup>th</sup> January, 2023

<sup>24</sup> Available at "Paradise (Jannat)". Al-Islam.org., Last accessed on 20<sup>th</sup> January, 2023



a state of vulnerability during childhood, and culminates in a state of vulnerability throughout old age. Children undergo physical and mental development, enabling them to acquire strength, advance in various aspects of life, and ultimately achieve positions of influence and authority. Every passing day, they progressively approach the zenith of their youthful vigour and acquire additional physical power. In contrast, the elderly experience a gradual decline in physical and cognitive abilities as they progress towards the end of their lifespan<sup>25</sup>. In an alternate verse, the Holy Quran posits, "Should We bestow upon an individual an extended lifespan, we shall cause a reversal in their inherent disposition." Will they not comprehend?" According to the scriptural text of the Holy Qur'an, specifically in Ya-Sin 36:68, a certain verse is referenced. This implies that as individuals age, they experience a decline in physical strength and a deterioration of their overall health<sup>26</sup>. The human capacity for cognition diminishes, memory retention weakens, and physical strength deteriorates throughout time. The inherent flaw in human nature is that our pursuit of perfection often leads to the manifestation of weaknesses, our possession of power can paradoxically result in handicap, and the ephemeral qualities of freshness and beauty inevitably succumb to the ravages of time, resulting in the emergence of wrinkles and ugliness. As individuals age, they may experience cognitive limitations that hinder their ability to acquire new knowledge, as well as potentially leading to the deterioration of previously acquired information. In an alternative stanza, the line states, "The act of creation and the subsequent departure of souls at the time of death are attributed to the divine entity." Moreover, there exist individuals who are regressed to a state of diminished cognitive capacity, rendering them devoid of knowledge previously acquired. According to the verse 16:70 of the Holy Qur'an, it is said that...As individuals age, they are confronted with the various challenges associated with the later stages of life<sup>27</sup>.

Islam bestows upon the elderly a distinct and elevated position, as evidenced by various writings that advocate for Muslims to hold them in high esteem and exhibit respect towards them. The Islamic faith places significant emphasis on the elderly, not solely due to their abundance of wisdom and life experience, but also owing to their esteemed standing in the sight of Allah. The teachings found in the Holy Quran and Hadith guide Muslims on how to engage with and treat their elders and parents. Displaying compassion and reverence towards the elderly is regarded as a fundamental component of Islamic conduct<sup>28</sup>.

The Prophet of Islam explicitly stated that individuals who do not demonstrate tenderness towards the young and respect towards the elderly are not considered members of the Muslim community, as documented in a Hadith from at Tirmidhi. This Hadith underscores the significance of displaying reverence towards older individuals in Islamic teachings. Anas ibn Malik, a narrator, conveyed a saying of the Prophet that if a young person shows honour to an elderly person based on their age, Allah will ensure that someone will show them honour in their old age. This Hadith, found in At-Tirmidhi, highlights the reciprocal nature of respect between different age groups. It emphasises the transient nature of youth and old age in the cycle of life, serving as a reminder to the youth of the inevitability of ageing. Islam aims to instill this fundamental truth of the human condition in the younger generation<sup>29</sup>.

This verse presents the notion that the present cohort of young individuals will eventually transition into the older demographic in the future, and they will experience the outcomes of their actions during their youth. The Hadith underscores the significance of demonstrating deference and veneration towards elderly individuals, irrespective of their racial or religious heritage<sup>30</sup>. Prophet Muhammad played a pivotal role in advancing this concept, as he advocated for the welfare and assistance of the elderly, regardless of their gender, race, or religious association. Moreover, he

<sup>25</sup> Available at <https://www.al-islam.org/divine-perspective-on-rights-a-commentary-of-imam-sajjads-treatise-ofrights/right-n-43-right-older>, last accessed on 14<sup>th</sup> July, 2023

<sup>26</sup> id

<sup>27</sup> id

<sup>28</sup> Available at <https://classroom.synonym.com/islamic-respect-for-elders-12087809.html>, Last accessed on 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2023

<sup>29</sup> ibid

<sup>30</sup> Available at <https://www.whyislam.org/family-in-islam-2/elderly-care/>, Last accessed on 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2023

personally exemplified these principles through his own conduct<sup>31</sup>.

According to Imam Sajjad, it is important to show respect to elderly individuals due to their esteemed status, advanced age, and adherence to the Islamic faith. He cautions against any form of mistreatment towards older individuals, citing a verse from the Quran which states, "Surely this must be your leader who has taught you magic" (The Holy Qur'an, Taha 20:71)<sup>32</sup>. Abu Musa Al-Ashari, in his narration, conveys that the Prophet emphasised the significance of respecting elderly Muslims as a means of demonstrating reverence towards Allah (Abu Dawud). This Hadith establishes a connection between honouring the Creator and His creation, specifically highlighting the importance of showing veneration towards both the powerful and the vulnerable elderly population. The Hadith implies that various forms of respect and care should be extended to the elderly, including healthcare, psychological support, social assistance, economic aid, eradication of illiteracy, provision of education, and other forms of care that are currently advocated for by the international community.

Similarly, providing significance to elderly individuals in many situations serves as a gesture of reverence and esteem for them. According to the narration, the Prophet stated that he was instructed by Jibreel to prioritise the old. The Hadith addresses the topic of elder rights, emphasising the importance of showing respect towards individuals who are older than oneself due to their age. Furthermore, it highlights the significance of honouring their devotion to God, as they hold a higher position in the Islamic faith<sup>33</sup>. It is advisable to exercise restraint when engaging in conflicts with him during arguments, refraining from surpassing or overtaking him, and refraining from perceiving him as lacking intelligence. In the event that he exhibits imprudent behaviour towards you, it is advisable to demonstrate patience and show respect towards him, taking into consideration his adherence to the principles of Islam and his advanced age. This is due to the fact that the right of age is commensurate with the right of adherence to Islam. The assertion is made that divine power is the exclusive source of authority<sup>34</sup>.

Demonstrating reverence is a crucial aspect for individuals adhering to the Islamic faith, particularly when engaging with older individuals, particularly those with familial ties, such as the relationship between a grandfather and grandson. As an illustration, in the context of strolling together, it is customary for the younger individual to position themselves slightly behind and to the right of the elder, thereby conveying the notion of prioritising the senior's precedence<sup>35</sup>. It is customary for the elder individual to precede the younger individual while both entering and exiting any given location. In interpersonal discourse, it is imperative to accord priority to the older by granting them the opportunity to express their thoughts initially, while also demonstrating sincere attentiveness to their words. When engaging in conversation with an older individual, it is expected that a younger Muslim adheres to a composed and mild manner of speech. This courteous attitude should be maintained even during debates or discussions. The act of becoming furious or agitated is commonly regarded as a manifestation of disrespect.

According to the teachings of Mohammed Prophet, it is stated that individuals who demonstrate respect towards the elderly due to their advanced age and white hair would receive protection from the impending fear associated with the Day of Judgement<sup>36</sup>, as ordained by God, the Exalted. Islam emphasises that the presence of white hair is regarded as a symbol of reverence and a conduit for blessings within their belief system. According to Islamic teachings, it is incumbent upon us to show reverence and respect for individuals as they near the conclusion of their earthly existence<sup>37</sup>. In summary, Islam stipulates that failure to demonstrate reverence towards elderly individuals will result in punitive

<sup>31</sup> Available at <http://islam.ru/en/content/story/prophet-s-pbuh-mercy-towards-elderly>, last accessed on 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2023

<sup>32</sup> Supra 26

<sup>33</sup> Supra 32

<sup>34</sup> id

<sup>35</sup> Available at <https://english.tebyan.net/newindex.aspx?pid=42131>, Last accessed on 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2023

<sup>36</sup> Supra 26

<sup>37</sup> Supra 36

measures being imposed. Therefore, by showing reverence towards individuals with white hair, one can avoid facing consequences. The Holy Quran has juxtaposed the obligation owed to parents in close proximity to the duty to God. The affection towards parents and the corresponding obligations towards them hold a greater significance compared to the affection towards children and the corresponding obligations towards them. According to the divine proclamation, it is ordained by the Supreme Being that individuals should engage in exclusive worship of Him and exhibit benevolence towards their parents. In the event that either one or both individuals attain advanced age in your presence, it is advised to refrain from expressing any form of exasperation or reproach towards them. Instead, it is recommended to consistently communicate with them in a gentle and considerate manner. The verse referenced is Quran 17:23. According to the divine proclamation, the Supreme Being instructs individuals to exhibit humility and tenderness towards others, expressing a plea for divine mercy upon them, acknowledging their role in nurturing and raising one during their formative years. The verse referenced is Quran 17:24. The Quran emphasises the importance of obedience and compassion towards parents, stating that among virtuous acts, demonstrating respect, obedience, and kindness towards parents is considered highly significant, ranking closely to the act of worshipping Allah<sup>38</sup>. Likewise, the act of beseeching the divine mercy of Allah posthumously serves as a source of solace for individuals within their burial sites. It is incumbent upon offspring to engage in prayer for the posthumous pardon of their parents and to exhibit appropriate reverence towards their relatives and acquaintances.

According to the teachings of Prophet Muhammad, there exists a belief that the spiritual destiny of an individual is significantly influenced by their parents. This belief posits that if an individual demonstrates obedience, attends to the needs of their parents, and strives to ensure their happiness and comfort, they will be rewarded with entry into Paradise. Conversely, if an individual displays disrespect and rudeness towards their parents, neglects their needs and emotions, or causes them distress in any way, they will be condemned to Hell. It is particularly emphasised that during the later stages of their lives, parents require utmost care and attention. Devoting oneself to serving and caring for them during this period is regarded as the most effective means of pleasing the divine entity, Almighty Allah. Moreover, it is considered one of the more accessible paths towards attaining Paradise<sup>39</sup>.

#### 1.2.6. The Provision of Care for the Elderly in the Context of Christianity:

Christianity is the religion followed by the majority of the people in the world with over two billion followers named as Christians. They believe their religion as “Monotheistic” which means only one God and God sent Jesus Christ as his Son and he is the savior of mankind from the Sins. Christians worship in Churches and Cross is the symbol of Christianity. The gist of Christianity lies in the life, death and Christian beliefs on the resurrection of Jesus. Bible is the Holy Book of the Christians and contains Old Testament and New Testament. The Holy Bible instructs the people about the way how a Christian should live. To get a handle on the full significance and estimation of elderly, they have to take response to the Bible (both the Old Testament and the New Testament). Just in the light of the Word of God, One can comprehend the profound, moral and religious measurement of this phase of life. For the Biblical scholars this natural life, in spite of its numerous inescapable distresses and sufferings, is so basically great that the length of days is accounted a gift.

The elderly individuals mentioned in the sacred text are held in high regard, as longevity is viewed as a manifestation of divine favour (Genesis 11:10-32). Advanced age does not signify the culmination of one's spiritual journey; rather, it engenders a wealth of wisdom and comprehension concerning the fundamental nature of existence. Within the context of Christianity, old age assumes a significant role, serving as a privileged stage for placing trust in and surrendering to God. Despite their physical fatigue and confinement, the elderly resemble monks or hermits, as their prayers possess the capacity to encompass the entirety of the world. When confronted with the most arduous moments and feelings of frailty,

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<sup>38</sup> id

<sup>39</sup> Supra 36

the elderly have grounds to believe that they serve as instruments in the narrative of salvation<sup>40</sup>. This conviction arises from the Lord's pledge to satisfy and disclose His redemptive power to them through an extended lifespan (Psalm 91:16). The Bible teaches that, 'Stand up in the sight of the elders, show respect for the elderly and revere your God. (Leviticus 19:32). The term "provides" grants us access to the illumination of truth, allowing us to fully engage with the spiritual, moral, and theological aspects of this particular phase of existence. Sacred Scripture recognises old age as a gift that renews and that ought to be spent each day with an openness to God and to the neighbour. In the Old Testament the aged folks are seen as teachers<sup>41</sup>. Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity. According to Leviticus 19:32, one of the major commandments among the 10 commandments is "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord, your God is giving you. The biblical passage referenced is Exodus 20:12. Disobedience to parents seems to shorten life. There may be undutiful children who live to old age, and dutiful children who die early, but the promise abides in its basic aim. It is like the proverb, "The hand of the diligent maketh rich," yet industrious men have suffered the sting of poverty. Children are therefore justified in having respect firstly to the command of God, and subsequently to the recompense of the reward<sup>42</sup>. Whoever curses his father or his mother shall be put to death. According to Exodus 21:17, it is advised to adhere to parental authority in all matters, as this action is deemed pleasing to the divine being. The biblical verse referenced is Colossians 3:20. Filial piety is widely recognised as a responsibility with requirements that are commonly understood. The act of fulfilling these commitments not only offers immense satisfaction but also carries significant consequences if neglected, often resulting in severe and just retribution. On the other hand, a remarkably diligent progeny evokes pleasure, admiration, and respect from individuals who have the opportunity to witness their conduct. They adeptly navigate social spheres imbued with a brilliance that exceeds mere fame, thereby significantly augmenting their own subjective welfare. These individuals bestow happiness upon their parents and concurrently experience a state of profound contentment.

#### 1.2.7. The Provision of Care for the Elderly in the Context of Buddhism:

Buddhism, being the fourth largest global religion, enjoys a significant following of approximately 7% of the world's population, comprising individuals known as Buddhists. Its philosophical underpinnings can be traced back to Ancient India, where the teachings of the Buddha emerged during the period between the 6th and 4th centuries BCE. The term 'Buddha' denotes an individual who has achieved awakening or enlightenment. In contrast to other religious systems, Buddhism does not subscribe to the notion of a supreme deity. Rather, its central focus lies in surpassing suffering and the cycle of death and rebirth. Buddhism places great emphasis on personal spiritual development through the cultivation of morality, meditation, and wisdom, with the ultimate goal of attaining the state of 'Nirvana'. The religion encompasses a diverse array of beliefs, spiritual practises, and traditions that are firmly rooted in the teachings of the Buddha<sup>43</sup>.

The elderly stage refers to the phase that occurs towards the conclusion of an organism's inherent life cycle. The Tipinaka provides a definition of old age as the state of being older, physically exhausted, and advanced in years, nearing the end of life. The Buddha, in his teachings, described old age as a stage marked by the loss of teeth, greying of hair, wrinkling of skin, reduction in physical strength, and deterioration of bodily functions. <sup>44</sup>(S.II,2). The old age was described by decrease in the body conditions and its capacities alongside sickness and passing. The early 'Buddhism' saw the maturing life as an unending distress and nearing to the face of death. It was likewise seen that elderly independent of their physical limits stay in trouble and strife. The Buddhist way to deal with issues related with the old age is to perceive the idea of

<sup>40</sup> Available at [https://famvin.org/wiki/The\\_Elderly\\_as\\_viewed\\_from\\_the\\_perspective\\_of\\_the\\_Bible\\_and\\_the\\_Church%27s\\_magisterium](https://famvin.org/wiki/The_Elderly_as_viewed_from_the_perspective_of_the_Bible_and_the_Church%27s_magisterium), Last accessed on 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2023

<sup>41</sup> id

<sup>42</sup> id

<sup>43</sup> Old Age, [Guide to Buddhism A to Z](http://www.buddhisma2z.com/content.php?id=291), <http://www.buddhisma2z.com/content.php?id=291>

<sup>44</sup> id

the human condition, which is normal to all individuals. Amidst Buddhist period, it was over and again pronounced 'Dukkhe Lokopitthito' (world is made by sufferings). In Buddhism, respect for the elders had been mentioned in several areas<sup>45</sup>. According to a line found in the Dhammapada, a compilation of verses, it is stated that individuals who possess the practise of showing reverence and consistently demonstrate respect for their elders have an augmentation in four aspects, namely, their longevity, physical attractiveness, sense of contentment, and physical vigour.

The senior stage of life is characterised by physical degradation and cognitive decline, resulting in increased suffering. In accordance with Buddhist teachings, it is incumbent upon the younger generation to demonstrate respect and provide necessary care for the elderly, as an expression of kindness. The sense of filial piety is considered to be a contributing factor to the assumption of responsibility towards the elderly. The parental figures, known as Brahma, are revered as the primary educators and recipients of filial offerings because to their deep empathy for their family. According to traditional customs, it is customary for individuals of wisdom to demonstrate their respect and admiration by offering various forms of tribute, such as providing nourishment and refreshments, supplying garments and bedding, engaging in ceremonial anointing and bathing, as well as attending to the act of cleansing their feet. The act of providing these services to their parents is highly regarded by the wise, both in their present life and in the afterlife where they experience joy in heaven<sup>46</sup>.

Filial piety are viewed as upholding a crucial moral principle. The notion that parents deserve repayment for their efforts in raising their children is widely acknowledged as a moral imperative. This sentiment is encapsulated in the adage that among various immoral acts, lust is deemed the most severe, while among numerous virtuous deeds, filial piety is regarded as the foremost. Consequently, filial piety is perceived as an intrinsic element of human nature<sup>47</sup>. Individuals who neglect to demonstrate filial piety towards their parents are considered to possess a deficient moral framework, whereas those who do exhibit such behaviour are seen as adhering to a fundamental moral tenet.

#### 1.2.8. The Provision of Care for the Elderly in the Context of Sikhism:

Sikhism is one of the young major religions and occupies fifth place in the world. It was originated in the late 15th century and was founded in the Punjab region of the Indian sub-continent. The followers of the Sikhism is called Sikhs. Sikhism was founded by Guru Nanak and nine Gurus succeeded him. Guru Granth Sahib also known as the Adi Granth, is a book of spiritual guide containing the sacred scripture of Sikhism. It is a monotheistic religion. The place of worship is Gurudwara. Sikhism mainly lays its importance in doing good deeds rather than carrying out rituals. The basic belief for Sikhism is respect towards elders. According to a particular hymn, it is stated that an individual who fails to demonstrate reverence towards their ancestors throughout their lifetime, but instead organises commemorative feasts after their passing. I am interested in understanding the means by which his economically disadvantaged predecessors can obtain the remnants of sustenance consumed by avian and canine creatures. The numerical value provided by the user is 76. The hymn in question critiques individuals who fail to demonstrate reverence towards their ancestors throughout their lifetime, but subsequently exhibit such respect upon their ancestors' demise. It is evident that it is imperative to demonstrate reverence towards older individuals during their lifetime<sup>48</sup>.

Sikhism places significant emphasis on the role of family in promoting the long-term sustainability of the community. It highlights the imperative for every Sikh individual to cultivate a deep sense of respect for their parents and maintain positive relationships with them. The teachings of Sikhism assert that without acknowledging and honouring one's parents, it becomes impossible to fully comprehend the profound truths encapsulated within the Vedas. Additionally, Sikhism draws a parallel between the act of abandoning one's parents and aimlessly wandering in desolate places, thereby

<sup>45</sup> Arya Nani, Respect to Elders, (Feb, 2010) [https://mettainaction.files.wordpress.com/2012/06/2010-02-mia\\_respect-to-the-eldersburma-update-feb-2010](https://mettainaction.files.wordpress.com/2012/06/2010-02-mia_respect-to-the-eldersburma-update-feb-2010)

<sup>46</sup> Id.

<sup>47</sup> Lewis Richmond "Aging as a Spiritual Practice: A Contemplative Guide to Growing Older and Wiser" (Gotham Books, 2012)

<sup>48</sup> Respect for Parents in Sikhism, Vaar 37 Pauri13 [https://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Respect\\_for\\_Parents\\_in\\_Sikhism](https://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Respect_for_Parents_in_Sikhism).



rendering any acts of service or worship offered to deities futile<sup>49</sup>. These principles, encapsulated in the concept of Pithies, serve to underscore the inherent futility of mistreating one's parents.

#### 1.2.9. The Provision of Care for the Elderly in the Context of Jainism:

Jainism, an ancient religious tradition that originated in India between the 7th and 5th centuries BCE, is often regarded in conjunction with Hinduism and Buddhism. Its followers, known as Jains, derive their designation from the Sanskrit term "Jina," which connotes conquest or triumph. This conquest pertains to the endeavour to overcome bodily senses and desires in order to achieve enlightenment and spiritual purity. The contemporary manifestation of Jainism was shaped by Mahavira, the 24th Tirthankara, whose teachings are preserved in the sacred scriptures referred to as the "Agamas." The paramount principle of Jainism is "Ahimsa," which translates to non-violence, and is accompanied by the principles of Right Belief, Right Knowledge, and Right Conduct. The life cycle of a living being encompasses various stages of growth, including infancy, childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, middle age, and old age. These developmental phases represent transient forms (paryaya) of a living being, while the soul itself is considered to be permanent (Dravya)<sup>50</sup>.

Jainism places significant emphasis on the veneration of elders, but this is not its sole focus. At its essence, Jainism is rooted in a deep concern for the welfare of all entities within the cosmos, as well as the holistic vitality of the universe. According to Jainism, all living beings, encompassing animals, plants, and humans, possess animate souls. These souls are regarded as inherently equal in worth and warrant profound respect and compassion<sup>51</sup>.

Based on the aforementioned information, it can be deduced that the elderly population necessitates heightened attention during their advanced years due to their susceptibility and reliance. However, children often manifest adverse behaviours towards them, resulting in diverse forms of mistreatment experienced by those assuming the role of carers for the elderly, as previously indicated. When the rights of the elderly come into conflict with the obligations of their offspring, elder abuse emerges as the regrettable outcome. These diverse manifestations of elder abuse are also recognised as criminal offences against the elderly, prompting the inclusion of specific provisions within various legislative frameworks. Furthermore, there exist significant criminal acts that directly or indirectly impact the elderly population as a consequence of these types of elder abuses.

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<sup>49</sup> id

<sup>50</sup> Narayana, Ala & Thrigulla, Saketh Ram & Varanasi, Subhose. (2007). GERIATRIC HEALTH CARE- A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE. Bulletin of the Indian Institute of History of Medicine (Hyderabad). 28. 1-19. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273577001\\_geriatric\\_Health\\_Care\\_A\\_Historical\\_Perspective](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273577001_geriatric_Health_Care_A_Historical_Perspective).

<sup>51</sup> Id.