World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology
International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences
Vol:9, No:09, 2015

Religion, Health and Ageing: A Geroanthropological Study on Spiritual Dimensions of Well-Being among the Elderly Residing in Old Age Homes in Jallandher Punjab, India

Authors : A. Rohit Kumar, B. R. K. Pathak

Abstract : Background: Geroanthropology or the anthropology of ageing is a term which can be understood in terms of the anthropology of old age, old age within anthropology, and the anthropology of age. India is known as the land of spirituality and philosophy and is the birthplace of four major religions of the world namely Hinduasim, Buddhisim, Jainisim, and Sikhism. The most dominant religion in India today is Hinduism. About 80% of Indians are Hindus. Hinduism is a religion with a large number of Gods and Goddesses. Religion in India plays an important role at all life stages i.e. at birth, adulthood and particularly during old age. India is the second largest country in the world with 72 million elder persons above 60 years of age in 2001 as compared to china 127 million. The very concept of old age homes in India is new. The elderly people staying away from their homes, from their children or left to them is not considered to be a very happy situation. This paper deals with anthropology of ageing, religion and spirituality among the elderly residing in old age homes and tries to explain that how religion plays a vital role in the health of the elderly during old age. Methods: The data for the present paper was collected through both Qualitative and Quantitative methods. Old age homes located in Jallandher (Punjab) were selected for the present study. Age sixty was considered as a cut off age. Narratives, case studies were collected from 100 respondents residing in old age homes. The dominant religion in Punjab was found to be Sikhism and Hinduism while Jainism and Buddhism were found to be in minority. It was found that as one grows older the religiosity increases. Religiosity and sprituality was found to be directly proportional to ageing. Therefore religiosity and health were found to be connected. Results and Conclusion: Religion was found out to be a coping mechanism during ill health. The elderly living in old age homes were purposely selected for the study as the elderly in old age homes gets medical attention provided only by the old age home authorities. Moreover, the inmates in old age homes were of low socio-economic status couldn't afford medical attention on their own. It was found that elderly who firmly believed in religion were found to be more satisfied with their health as compare to elderly who does not believe in religion at all. Belief in particular religion, God and godess had an impact on the health of the elderly.

Keywords : ageing, geroanthropology, religion, spirituality
Conference Title : ICAES 2015 : International Conference on Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences
Conference Location : Singapore, Singapore
Conference Dates : September 10-11, 2015

Open Science Index, Humanities and Social Sciences Vol:9, No:09, 2015 publications.waset.org/abstracts/30526/pdf