

Ageing Studies from the Anthropological Point of View

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Abstract

Ageing is a universal human experience, but its meaning, expression, and social significance vary considerably across cultures and societies. From an anthropological perspective, ageing is understood not merely as a biological process but as a complex phenomenon shaped by cultural values, social institutions, economic conditions, family structures, and individual experiences. This study examines ageing through an anthropological lens, focusing on how different societies construct and interpret old age, later life, and the changing roles of older people. It explores the relationship between ageing, kinship, family, gender, work, social status, health, and community participation. Particular attention is given to the diverse experiences of older adults in traditional and modern societies and to the ways in which cultural beliefs influence perceptions of dependency, wisdom, productivity, and social responsibility. The study also considers the effects of urbanization, migration, globalization, changing family patterns, and technological development on the lives of older people. Anthropological approaches emphasize the importance of understanding ageing within its specific cultural and historical contexts rather than treating it as a uniform process. Ethnographic studies further demonstrate how older individuals actively negotiate identity, dignity, autonomy, and social relationships throughout later life. Overall, an anthropological study of ageing contributes to a broader understanding of human diversity and highlights the importance of culturally sensitive approaches to the social, economic, and emotional dimensions of later life.

Keywords: Ageing, Anthropology, Older Adults, Culture, Society, Kinship, Family, Gender, Identity, Ethnography, Social Ageing, Later Life.

