AGEING AND AGEISM IN NAGA SOCIETY: A STUDY ON DETERMINANTS

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Abstract

While the chronological process is an inevitable part of human life, the problems associated with ageing appear to be a product of modern era. As of 2022, with about 10 per cent of population above 60 years of age, India is considered a greying nation which all the more requires for review of the status of older adults from different perspectives. While traditional Naga society had assigned a place of honour and respect to the older people as they played a valuable role in transmission of cultural heritage, rapid social and economic changes are poised to have severe implications on the circumstances under which they live in contemporary Naga society. There prevails the stereotype of older adults as unproductive human resource which often leads to them being as burden towards society and redundant. Unlike other forms of discrimination such as racism, sexism, etc., ageism has not received much academic attention particularly in Naga society. Ageism can significantly impact the experiences of the older adults in terms of economic opportunities, access to health care and overall wellbeing. In light of this, the present paper explores the attitude of the society towards the older adults with the objective of arriving at a more nuanced understanding of the issue of ageism in the Naga society. As Naga society straddles the transition between traditionalism and modernity, bridging the knowledge gap of this significant segment of population through critical sociological engagement can yield important policy implications in line with the challenges and prospects of the Act East Policy.

Keywords: Population, ageing, ageism, older adults, Nagaland.

Introduction

Population ageing is one of the most prominent demographic transitions currently observed across the globe, albeit at varying scales. Key drivers of this phenomenon include a significant decline in mortality rates, reduced fertility rates, and improvements in diet, living conditions, and healthcare facilities (Weil, 1997; Zweifel, Felder &Meiers, 1999). Conceptually, population ageing was initially defined as an increase in the proportion of individuals aged 55 or 65 years and older (Clark, Kreps & Spengler, 1978). However, the United Nations defines population ageing as the rapid growth in the proportion of individuals aged 60 years and above relative to the total population. According to the UN, a country is classified as an "ageing" or "greying" nation when the proportion of people aged 60 years or older reaches 7% or more of the total population.

According to a report by IIPS and UNFPA (2023), India has been undergoing rapid population ageing since 2010. The proportion of the population aged above 60 years, which was approximately 8.6% during the 2011 census, has increased to 10.5% as of 2022, and is projected to exponentially rise to 20.8% by 2050.

Population ageing in itself is a positive aspect resulting from increase in longevity and itbecomes a concern only when at the macro level a country starts to experience increased economic challenges as a result of lower economic growth, higher strain and costs on the health care sector and labour shortages and so on. Even at the micro level, population ageing have shed light on the different aspects of life that older adults experience day in and day out.Being out of the work force, declining health condition, low income and savings, unstable living arrangements and care giving can significantly impact their wellbeing.

At the micro level, how institutions or individuals in the society perceive the older adults can also affect their experience of ageing process and overall outlook of life.As such population ageing has also shed lights on prevailing stereotype of how they are viewed or looked upon by the younger people in the society. This attitude towards the older adults either positive or negative purely on the basis of age is what came to be termed as ageism. In recent years efforts have been given to undertake studies related to ageism because, society in general devalues older adults due to their perceived redundancy which often leads to them being generalized as burdens and not as productive human resources in society.

Though ageism in different forms have been an inherent part of human nature, it was only after when Butler (1969) introduced the concept of 'ageism', which was defined as a form of prejudice or discrimination based on age normally by one age group towards other age groups, more often by young people towards older people, that interests in this subject area have gained momentum and continue to gain significant importance. Later studies like Iversen, Larsen &Solan (2009), expanded the concept of ageism by defining it as a "negative or positive stereotypes, prejudice or discrimination against (or to the benefit of) ageing people because of their chronological age or on the basis of a perception of them being old or elderly".

Ageism specifically aiming towards the older people is marked by certain predominating negative stereotypes such as after attaining certain age, older people are

generalized to have poor physical and mental abilities, become unattractive, dependent and unproductive. At the same time older people are also stereotyped to be kind, wise, dependable and happy (Palmore, 2005; Bugental & Hehman, 2007). Ageism is also prevalent in almost all the aspects of our lives, be it in the work place, health care, education, media, day to day interactions and social policies (Dennis & Thomas, 2007; Cox, 2017).

In fact, beyond the presence, the prevailing intensity and effects are what made ageism to be considered as the third great "ism" following racism and sexism (Palmore, 1999). However, ageism is considered to be different from other forms of discriminations on grounds that firstly, ageism is a disadvantage which given time everyone will get to experience and secondly it is embedded in our very culture (Calasanti, 2005).

Ageism as it has been observed could be directed towards both the young and old people alike, however it is the view against the older people that deserved more attention due to the high prevalence against the older people and issues associated with growing old does not diminish for the older adults as time goes on (Butler, 2005; Iversen, Larsen &Solan, 2009). And due to its pronounced impact and negative preconception on the rapidly growing older population both in developed and developing countries, the issue of ageism needed to become forefront of mainstream discussions.

Determinants and effects of ageism towards older adults

According to Garrido et al. (2019), in their study of ageing and incidence of ageism in Spain among different age groups,it was observed that one of the main reasons for continued wide spread was due to very low knowledge about ageing among the younger age groups of the population. The study also observed that age was a significant determinant of ageist attitude, in that older adults held more negative perception against ageing than the younger individuals. In a very elaborate review on the determinants of ageism from previous literatures, Marques et al. (2020) found that about 13 factors were closely associated with ageism against older adults. Out of the various variables, most prominent items such as age, years of education and marital status were mainly negatively associated with ageism. Whereas, factors like culture and ethnicity, area of residence whether rural or urban and behavioural and psychological factors such as fear of death, anxiety regarding ageing were found to have mainly positive association with ageism. Ha & Kim (2021) too, in their study on the factors affecting ageism among Korean nursing studentsreported that age was one of the main demographic variable related to ageism, where older nursing students were more ageist than compared to younger students.

Ageism, whether conscious or unconscious, can profoundly impact the daily lives of older adults. According to Nolan (2011), any experience with ageism will negatively impact older people's view on life and may feel like outsiders who are invisible to the society and ultimately diminish the sense of belongingness. It was particularly identified that ageism was highly prevalent in health care practice where older people were rampantly discriminated against based on their age resulting in under treatment, receive lower standard care, delay in diagnosis, treatment and may also not follow same medical protocol for older adults as done for the younger patients.

Study on the global reach of ageism by Chang et al (2020) also observed that ageism be it institutional, interpersonal or self-directed, has been found to be negatively impacting the older people in all the aspects of life in which it is manifested including health, workplace and everyday social life.

Raynor (2015) observed that impacts of ageism are commonly found in work place, healthcare, media, politics and in civil engagements. The negative impacts of ageism usually take the form of finding difficulty to get gainful employment despite willing to work, being dismissed by health care professionals due to frequent health concerns and mormally being portrayed in a negative light in media. Even in politics, older people running for office are questioned on their age and the ability to perform under intense pressure of running the government. Many a times, being generalized and looked upon as old and useless, society fail to harness the knowledge and wisdoms of the older people. Lyons et al. (2017) studied the relationship between experience of ageism and mental health outcomes such as depression, anxiety, stress and positive mental health among older adults above 60 years in Australia. In a correlation analysis between ageism and the mental health outcomes, experience of ageism was significantly linked to effects in all the factors of mental health, where higher levels of depression, anxiety and stress was observed

Given the above discussed premises, in this study we have tried to understand the overall attitude of the respondents between the age of 12 to 59 towards the older adults above 60 years of age in Nagaland, a tribal state located in the North-Eastern region of India. In order to do that thisstudy seeks to observe the characterization of the older adults in the Naga society and study the differences in the attitude towards older adults based on socio-demographic factors such as age, gender, marital status and education.

Data and Methodology

Ageism can either be directed towards others or be self-directed and in this study we are concerned with the former, particularly by the younger people towards the older adults in the society. The present study is based on a cross sectional primary data collected through online survey method from a total of 120 respondents ranging between the age of 12 to 59 years. Even though community was not a part of any variable, in order to justify the research objectives it can be stated that all the respondents were from various Naga tribes spread across the state of Nagaland. The Nagas are a very closed knitted tribal society with a sense of strong community belongingness. Elders are someone who is highly regarded and respected by the community members and considered to have an important role and position in the society. Given this background, this study will attempt to see how the younger generations will fare in our ageism scale.

In order to draw a more robust analytical comparison among the respondents, the sample was categorized into three different age groups identified as respondents belonging to Generation Z (12 to 27 years of age), millennials (28 to 43 years of age) and Generation X (44 to 59 years of age) respectively (henceforth Gen Z, millennials and Gen X). Besides age, other socio-demographic characteristics such as gender, marital status and highest level of education was defined and included as the main predictor

variables for our regression model.

To measure the level of ageism among the respondents a 4-point Likert scale based on Fraboni Scale of Ageism consisting of 28 questions was modified and implemented in the study. Scores for responses in the scale were coded as 1(Strongly disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Agree) and 4 (Strongly agree) respectively and for questions reflecting positive attitude were reverse coded during the analysis process.Based on works by Sullivan& Artino (2013) and Ha& Kim (2021), score of each respondent for all questions were summed up and was placed within the range of total possible score of 28 to 112. The mid-point was marked at the score of 56 and hence defined that total score below 56 indicated that respondents as less ageist and higher score as more ageist towards the older adults. This way we derived the predictand variable having binary values where less ageist was assigned value of 0 and more ageist was assigned value of 1.

To test the reliability of the Likert scale for measure ofageist attitude, Cronbach's Alpha test was done resulting in a coefficient alpha value of 0.82 indicating a reliable correlation among the items of the scale and that the grouped values measure the referenced variable.And to model the relationship between levels of ageism with respect to various socio-demographic characteristics, binary logistic regression method was applied. All tests and analysis was done using SPSS 20.

Overview of population ageing in Nagaland

This section provides an initial preview of the population ageing status in the state of Nagaland since 2011 as recorded by the official Census of India. As seen in Table 1, the population of Nagaland can be considered a young population as per the estimates of 2011 Census where people above 60 years of age consisted of about 5.19% of the total state population. Even though data indicated a fluctuation since 1991 census, in recent years there has been an increase in proportion of population above 60 years over the past decades, as during 2001 census the percentage of individuals above age 60 was about 4.5% of the total population. Nevertheless, along with the country and the rest of the world with a better health facilities and care, access to resources, etc. proportion of people above 60 years of age is expected to increase even more.

We can also see that number of people living beyond 80 years of age may not be increasing, but number of people crossing the threshold of age 60 sure is increasing decade after decade, which to some extent does affirm that within the next two to three decades the proportion of older adults above 60 years will grow even more significantly. As of 2011, the state of Nagaland also had more older males (53.33%) than older females (46.67%). However, percentage of oldermales has been declining since 1991 at 58.67% to 56.17% in 2001 to 53.33% in 2011. On the other hand, proportion of olderfemales has been rising steadily from 41.33% in 1991 to 43.83% in 2001 and to 46.67% in 2011.

Table 1: Nagaland's population above 60 years for 1991, 2001 and 2011 censuses

Age group	Census 1991 (%)			Census 2001 (%)			Census 2011 (%)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
60-69	21063 (57.97)	15274 (42.03)	36337 (56.98)	29677 (56.31)	23027 (43.69)	52704 (58.35)	32484 (53.46)	28278 (46.54)	60762 (59.15)
70-79	9743 (58.39)	6944 (41.61)	16687 (26.16)	13349 (55.6)	10659 (44.4)	24008 (26.58)	14895 (52.9)	13263 (47.1)	28158 (27.41)
80+	6610 (61.47)	4143 (38.53)	10753 (16.86)	7710 (56.65)	5901 (43.35)	13611 (15.07)	7400 (53.6)	6406 (46.4)	13806 (13.44)
Total	37416 (58.67)	26361 (41.33)	63777 (5.27)	50736 (56.17)	39587 (43.83)	90323 (4.54)	54779 (53.33)	47947 (46.67)	102726 (5.19)
Total popu.	1209546			1990036			1978502		

Source: Government of India, Census 1991, 2001, 2011

Based on this trend, with the release of the latest census, it can be assured that the proportion of the population aged 60 years and above will be significantly higher, necessitating a deeper understanding of ageing process among the different cohorts of population so as to reduce ageism towards older adults as well as possibilities to secure their socioeconomic needs, healthcare requirements, and policy interventions to ensure their well-being and overall quality of life.

Results and Discussion

Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

In this section the main socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents of the study have been discussed and these variables will also be employed as the main predictor variables for the various analysis later on.

Table 2: Total respondents by age groups and gender

Age group	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Gen Z	20	17	37 (30.8)
Millennials	31	38	69 (57.5)
Gen X	3	11	14 (11.7)
Total	54 (45)	66 (55)	120

As given in Table 2, a total of 120 respondents were covered in the survey of which 54 (45%) were male and 66 (55%) were female. The respondents were categorized into three main age groups characterized in the form of different generations namely Gen Z (12-27 years), Millennials (28-43 years) and Gen X (44-59 years) respectively. Of which

37 (30.8%) respondents were Gen Z, 69 (57%) were Millennials and 14 (11.7%) were Gen X.

In Table 3 the marital status have been broadly categorized in to unmarried and married respondents where 91 (75%) were unmarried and 29 (24.17%) were married respectively. Unlike millennials and Gen X, none of the respondents under Gen Z were married, whereas none of the male under Gen X was unmarried. Overall, 43 (35.83%) of the male respondents were unmarried and 48 (40%) of female were unmarried. On the other hand, 11 (9.17%) of male were married and 18 (15%) of female were married.

Highest level of education attained by the respondents have been recorded by categorizing the qualification into three main groups where those with at least Higher Secondary education were about 17 (14.2%) of the total respondents, followed by 28 (23.2%) graduates and 75 (62.5%) with post graduate degree respectively as shown in Table 4.

Table 3: Marital status by age and gender

Age group	Unmarried (%)		Married (%)		Total (%)
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Gen Z	20 (46.5)	17 (35.4)	0	0	**37 (30.8)**
Millennials	23 (53.5)	29 (60.4)	8 (72.7)	9 (50)	**69 (57.5)**
Gen X	0	2	3 (27.3)	9 (50)	**14 (11.7)**
Total	**43 (35.83)**	**48 (40)**	**11 (9.17)**	**18 (15)**	**120 (100)**
	91 (75.83)		**29 (24.17)**		

Table 4: Education level by age and gender

Age group	Higher Sec. (%)		Graduate (%)		Post Graduate (%)		Total (%)
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Gen Z	9	7	7	7	4	3	**37 (30.8)**
Millennials	1	0	10	0	20	38	**69 (57.5)**
Gen X	0	0	1	3	2	8	**14 (11.7)**
Total	**17 (14.2)**		**28 (23.2)**		**75 (62.5)**		**120**

Perceived characteristics of older adults in Nagaland

Normally, ageism towards older adults can take the forms of preconceived notions such as stereotypes, discrimination and avoidance by the younger cohorts. In order to have a glimpse on the impressions that younger age groups normally have when the concept of older adultwas presented, definition of older adult by age and other characteristics

was examined. As such, when it comes to consider a person as older adult or 'elderly' simply based on age, it was identified that majority of respondents 51.7% opined that anyone above the age of 60 can be considered as 'elderly' or older adult, followed by 33.3% considered a person above the age of 70 and 10% felt anyone above 50 years of age and about 5% selected the age of 80 years and above respectively.

When asked to rank the factors that contribute to labeling a person as an older adult in order of significance such as age, physical appearance, health condition, retirement status and societal norms, majority of the respondents about 71.67% ranked age as the main factor, followed by physical appearance with about 37.5% at second rank and health status with about 34.17% respectively. Factors such as societal norms including marriage, having a grand children and retirement from jobs were not considered to be an important factor in labeling a person as an older adult. Albeit different percentages, similar characteristics of labeling a person as older adult based on the above factors echoed during inter-generations comparison. This reinforces the understanding that for people between the age of 12 to 59 years, the age of a person is not just a number, rather a sign of reaching certain milestone in life which is marked by certain positive or negative preconceived notions.

Further, the respondents were also asked to rank certain characteristics such as wisdom, life experiences, and frail health, economic and physical dependency which they associated with someone they consider older adult. Based on the responses, it was observed that in rank 1 majority of about 46.67% attributed wisdom or having attributes of being knowledgeable to be the main defining characteristic of older person. In rank 2, majority of about 45% felt that older people are characterized by many life experiences. Although, they were seen as frail, majority of the respondents of about 57.5% did not find them to be someone who is economically and physically dependent.

Ageism in Nagaland

Based on the descriptive statistical analysis of the various items included in the ageism scale which is also the predictand variable, the nature of ageism both positive and negative in the form of avoidance, discrimination or stereotypes against older adults can be observed from Table 5. Questions ranging from 1 through 20 are negative in nature where on the scale of 1 to 4 (strongly disagree to strongly agree) median score above 2 indicated a more ageist attitude and vice versa. On the other hand questions from 21 through 28 are positive in nature and for uniformity have been reverse coded accordingly. The overall mean score of the ageism scale was 2.13 with a standard deviation value of .27 respectively. Review of the overall mean and median score of the scale show that young people have more negative stereotypical ageist attitude towards older adultsas reflected by matterslike death, where in comparison, death of younger people seems to be more tragic, or preference of company where older adults are expected to remain confined to their own age group. Older people were also generalized regarding the lack of physical capabilities to perform tasks such as maintaining certain level of hygiene or skillful activities such as driving vehicles reflecting certain levels of discrimination.

Table 5: Descriptive statistics of the ageism scale

Sl.no.	Items	N	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
1.	Death of older adults less tragic than young people	120	**2.63**	**3**	0.859
2.	Older adults are stingy	120	2.11	2	0.632
3.	No interest in making new friends	120	**2.64**	**3**	0.646
4.	Older adults live in the past	120	**2.63**	**3**	0.674
5.	I normally avoid eye contact with old people	120	*1.85*	*2*	0.682
6.	Hate conversation with old people	120	*1.63*	*2*	0.581
7.	Complex conversationnot possible	120	*1.95*	*2*	0.684
8.	Feel depressed near older adults	120	*1.91*	*2*	0.674
9.	Should find friends own age	120	2.04	2	0.64
10.	Don't want to spend time	120	*1.79*	*2*	0.647
11.	Mustn't renew driving license	120	**2.63**	**3**	0.721
12.	Sports facility not needed	120	*1.84*	*2*	0.594
13.	Cannot be trusted with childcare	120	2.33	2	0.599
14.	Happy in same age circle	120	**2.72**	**3**	0.688
15.	Better live separate	120	*1.78*	*2*	0.624
16.	Sad to hear plight of older adults	120	**2.83**	**3**	0.57
17.	Older adults have poor hygiene	120	**2.58**	**3**	0.575
18.	Prefer not live with older adults	120	*1.93*	*2*	0.618
19.	Older adults are boring	120	2.3	2	0.693
20.	Older adults don't need money	120	2.29	2	0.64
21.	Older adults deserves same rights	120	*1.57*	*2*	0.632
22.	Should make feel welcome	120	*1.75*	*2*	0.598
23.	Older adults company are enjoyable	120	*1.9*	*2*	0.525
24.	Encourage to talk politics	120	2.17	2	0.665
25.	Older adults are interesting	120	2.03	2	0.564
26.	Society benefit from their wisdom	120	*1.56*	*2*	0.619
27.	Older adults arenot redundant	120	2.15	2	0.617
28.	Older adults can be productive	120	2.15	2	0.617

On the positive side, the respondents are observed to have less ageist attitude against the older adults mainly with regard to factors like inter-age group socializing, societal value contribution, rights and freedom of expression. To a certain extent, respondents did not show the need to avoid contact or conversations with the older adults and also have a positive response towards the co-inhabitant living arrangements, reflecting lower form of avoidance ageism. Overall, mean and standard deviation values from the Fraboni Scale of Ageism indicate a consistent tendency of mild to moderate ageist attitude towards older adults.

Based on the sum score of the 28 items from the ageism scale, minimum score among all the respondents was 44 and maximum individual score was 88. The overall mean score of the summed score was 59.69 and the median score was 59. Given the adopted methodology the median score was used to derive the values for the dependent variable and overall the data indicated that with 56 being the threshold score to define who is ageist and who is not, we can say that the median score do reflect that the ageism scale indeed show higher chance of ageist attitude towards the older adults, but not by significantly higher proportion.

Table 6: Cross analysis of the variables in the regression model (%)

Variables	Less ageist	More ageist	Total
Age groups			
Gen Z	13 (35.13)	24 (64.87)	**37**
Millennials	28 (40.58)	41 (54.42)	**69**
Gen X	1 (7.14)	13 (92.86)	**14**
Total	**42 (35)**	**78 (65)**	**120**
Gender			
Male	14 (25.92)	40 (74.08)	**54**
Female	28 (42.42)	38 (57.58)	**66**
Marital status			
Unmarried	33 (36.26)	58 (63.74)	**91**
Married	9 (31.03)	20 (68.97)	**29**
Education			
Higher secondary	8 (47.06)	9 (52.94)	**17**
Graduate	4 (14.29)	24 (85.71)	**28**
Post graduate	30 (40)	45 (60)	**75**

In Table 6, a cross analysis of having ageist attitude or not with regard to the main predictor variables in our logistic analysis model such as age, gender, marital status and education has been attempted. It can be observed that 42 (35%) of the total respondents scored less than the mid threshold score of 56. And on the other hand, a majority of respondents of about 78 (65%) had scored more than 56 points making them relatively

more ageist than their counterpart. Statistical significance of the cross analysis remains to be reviewed, however based on the initial result, similar outcomes of having more ageist characteristics can also be observed across the rest of the variables too.

Results for binary logistic regression

For an in-depth understanding of the nature of ageism among the younger population in Nagaland, binary logistic regression was applied as the main tool of statistical analysis. Given the nature of the modified dependent variable, it helped in examining the effects of socio-demographic factors like age, gender, marital status and education on the likelihood of having ageist attitude towards older adultsin the society. The model was statistically significant in explaining ageism, $\chi^2(7) = 18.64$, $p < .005$, and accounted for 19.8% of the variance in the dependent variable (Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.198$). The Hosmer and Lemeshow test indicated a good fit to the data, $\chi^2(7) = 1.857$, $p = .967$.

Variable wise, age group was found to have a significant impact on the likelihood of having ageist attitude among the respondents (Table 7). Within the age groups, Gen Z compared to the reference category Gen X were significantly less likely be ageist (B = -2.778, Wald = 1.331, p = .037, Exp (B) = .062, 95% CI [.005, .844]), indicating a lower odds of about 93.8% of having ageist attitude. Millennials were also statistically significant (B=-2.66, Wald = 5.283, p = .022, Exp (B) = .07, 95% CI [.007, .676]) and less likely than Gen X to have ageist attitude with an approximate lower odds ratio of 93%.

Table 7: Results of logistic regression with respect to ageist attitude among the respondents

Variables	Coefficient (B)	SE	Sig.	Odds Ratio [Exp (B)]
Age groups (Ref: Gen X)				
Gen Z	-2.778*	1.331	.037	.062
Millennials	-2.660*	1.157	.022	.07
Gender (Ref: Female)				
Male	.087	.436	.064	2.240
Marital status (Ref: Married)				
Unmarried	.572	.596	.338	1.772
Education (Ref: Post graduate)				
Hr. secondary	-.294	.785	.708	.746
Graduate	1.232	.703	.080	3.429

-2 Log likelihood = 136.749

Cox & Snell R Square = .144

Nagelkerke R Square = .198

Hosmer and Lemeshow Test = .967

Ref = reference category; last item in each set of variables

SE = Standard Error

Level of significance at *$p < 0.05$

Effect of gender seems to have a result with marginal significance level (B=.807, Wald = 3.422, p = .064, Exp (B) = 2.24, 95% CI [.953, 5.265]). Accordingly, though not significant, male respondents had 2.24 times higher odds of being more ageist compared to female respondents. With a high p value of .338 there appear to be no meaningful significant linkage between marital status and likelihood of ageist attitude among the respondents. Overall education level of the respondents also did not show a statistically significant result p = .087. However, within the different education level, respondents with up to higher secondary education were less likely than post graduates to have ageist attitude (B = -.294, Wald = .14, p = .71, Exp (B) = .746, 95% CI [.16, 3.473]), but the difference is not statistically significant. On the other hand, graduates were more likely to express ageist attitude compared to post graduates, but not statistically significant (B = 1.232, Wald = 3.06, p = .08, Exp (B) = 3.429, 95% CI [.864, 13.61]).

Discussion

This study aimed to understand couple of issues related to population above 60 years of age particularly with how young people within the age group of 12 to 59 in Naga society characterize and view them. On considering a person as an older adult, age beyond 60 years was selected by majority of the respondents as the cutoff point. For many, age was also the most important factor in labeling a person as an older adult, followed by physical appearance and health status. This reinforced the understanding that in Naga society, age of a person is more than just a number rather it is seen as an important milestone that marks a person's life. Factors such as societal norms including marriage and having grand children were not viewed as much as important.Older people in Naga society were also seen as the age group attributed with characteristics like wisdom and very experienced and knowledgeable.

Analysis of mean and standard deviation of the ageism scale showed an overall mean score of 2.13 and 0.27 respectively. Based on the data, young people were found to have more negative stereotype ageist attitude towards older adults in matters like death, physical capabilities and demanding skills like driving, or maintaining a hygienic life. On the other hand, respondents showed less ageist attitude in matters like socializing, contribution to societal values, rights and freedom of expression among the older adults. Overall, the ageism scale indicated a mix of very low to moderate level of ageist attitude towards the older adults and only a slight variation among the respondents.

Our ageism scale also generated a summed median score of 59 from the possible total range score of 28 to 112. Among the respondents, the minimum score was 44 and maximum score was 88. The median score was above the mid score of 56 which cannot be considered to be very high, yet it reflect that majority of the respondents exhibit at least moderate levels of ageist attitude towards older adults, but not by significantly higher proportion. In fact, having even much more lower median score in theory will be quite favourable as a society, since it will mean less to negligible ageist attitude by younger age groups towards older adults paving way for overall healthy ageing process.

Result from the regression analysis showed that age factor had a statistically significant impact on the likelihood of ageist attitude towards older adults. Where, younger age groups such as Gen Z and millennials were less likely than the Gen X to

be ageist, which do align with finding from study such as Garrido et al. (2019). Other factors like gender and education showed likelihood of showing ageist attitude towards older adults, but were statistically not significant. And factor like marital status showed no meaningful linkage to likelihood of ageist attitude among the young people.

The current study has some noticeable limitations such as the method of data collection through online survey. Despite many merits, using this method of data generation, the reach towards diverse sample becomes limited and hence generalization of results needs caution. Limitation in the sample size has also been noticed based on the results from some of the analysis. It is hoped that increase in the sample size can present a better result for some of the variables with respect to the degree of ageist attitude towards older adults in Nagaland in future researches.

Conclusion

Population ageing will continue and sooner or later even community like the Nagas will also feel the pinch of large scale increase in the proportion of older adults to the rest of the population either directly or indirectly across the state, country and the rest of the world. Community like the Nagas are seen as a close knit society, where older people are given high respect and regarded as an important part of any socially or culturally thriving community. Perhaps this is also one of the reasons behind why our analysis did not find significantly higher range of ageist attitude among the respondents. This we feel is a positive trait which should be carried on and make changes through education and awareness about the natural process of ageing and only then any misconception of generalizing the older people as redundant and an inclination towards growing ageist attitude can be pruned.

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