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The Fear of Growing Old: Lessons from Nigeria

T C Iruonagbe

# Abstract

Today, in most developed countries, issues relating to aging and the elderly have continued to command the attention of policy makers. This unfortunately cannot be said for most African Nations like Nigeria which have to grapple with such crucial problems as inflation rates, unemployment,

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hunger, poverty, insecurity etc. Yet, the population of the elderly is increasing just as the level of hopelessness and misery has gotten to its peak. One can therefore only imagine the consequences of the massive increase in the elderly population, especially as they steadily retire from the labour force. This therefore calls for adequate social resources and programmes to help ameliorate the sufferings of the elderly and provide adequate care for them. With unfavourable policies and programmes of government in different sectors of the economy, most workers are made to retire prematurely from service and consequently age quickly due to the level of neglect experienced by Pensioners who hardly receive their gratuity and pension before they are dead. This has created a lot of destitute amongst the very old in society. Government has not been able to do much with regards to processes of resettlement and rehabilitation of the elderly, especially since most families due to high levels of poverty cannot do much for their old ones. Based on these problems, this paper sets out to examine the fear of growing old and how people should prepare for old age and what the future holds for the aged in Nigeria, most especially the role of the government, private organisations and the families concerned.

IFE PsychologIA Vol. 16 (1) 2007: pp. 141-152

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http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ifep.v16i1.23768

IFE PsychologIA. ISSN: 1117-1421