INTRODUCTION

Erik Homburger Erikson, psychologist said “It is human to have a long childhood; it is civilized to have an even longer childhood. Long childhood makes a technical and mental virtuoso out of man, but it also leaves a life-long residue of emotional immaturity in him” (Bhatia B.D, 2008)

Generally personality traits are formed in opposites. We think of ourselves as optimistic or pessimistic, independent or dependent, emotional or unemotional, adventurous or cautious, leader or follower, aggressive or passive etc. Many of them are inborn temperament traits, but other characteristics, such as feeling either competent or inferior and many other acquired after birth, based on challenges and support we receive in growing up.

The man who did a great deal to explore this concept is Erik Erikson. Erikson was one of the few personality theorists that examined aging as a stage of development. He stated that personality development has eight levels that are hierarchical in order. Each stage is associated with a psychosocial crisis that is either resolved or not resolved. If not resolved then it results in failure for normal development of the personality and inhibition of other personality developments. (Narahari Gita, 2008).

The eighth stage of Erikson’s psychosocial model is Ego Integrity vs. Despair and it occurs in late adulthood, normally after 60 years of age. Ego integrity is the ego's accumulated assurance of its capacity for order and meaning. Despair is signified by a fear of one's own death, as well as the loss of self-sufficiency of loved partners and friends. Erikson suggests that this final stage begins when the individual begins to experience a sense of mortality. This may be in response to retirement, the death of a spouse or close friend, or simply result from changing social roles. No matter what the cause, this sense of mortality leads to the final life crisis. In this stage "pride over one’s accomplishments prevents depression and anxiety" about one's death. The basic question that people ask themselves during this stage is "what kind of life have I lived?" and the question stems from an impending sense of mortality. (Morgan, 2007)

People who can look back on their lives with happiness and think that they have lived a well rounded and fulfilling life will gain ego integrity and will not be fearful of death. "People develop ego integrity and accept their lives if they succeed, and develop a sense of wisdom a "detached concern with life itself in the face of death itself". If persons look back on their life and remember negative thoughts and dissatisfaction with life they will develop despair and
experience a fearfulness and anxiousness about death. "Too much wisdom leads to presumption, too much despair to a disdain for life”. It has also been said that healthy "children won't fear life if their elders have enough integrity not to fear death." (Morgan, 2007)

Elderliness is a qualitatively different experience for each subject. It is preponderantly good for some and a bad experience for others. Between these two extremes of good and bad quality, there is probably a continuum. Erikson has referred to the two extreme poles, satisfaction and dissatisfaction, as respectively the pole of 'integration' and of 'despair'. (Mcghie Andrew, 1969)

Explaining these Erikson's concepts, Kimmell et al summed up in the following way these two possibilities of emotional positioning of the elder facing the old age: 'if the elderly subject manages to build a secure sense of the ego and a perception of his/her legacy, be it through the children or the work, he/she maintain an ego integrity, whereas the incapability to provide for a solution for this conflict results simultaneously in disappointment with his/her own self (with the subject proper) and, therefore, despair. (Flávio M F Xavier, 2003)

Persons who achieve integrity can reflect on their lives as being meaningful and rich and are not fearful of death. In contrast, persons in despair are more likely to be disappointed with, and have difficulty making sense of, their past. They struggle with many unresolved issues, which contribute to their existential suffering like depression, fear of death, suicide etc. (Barnes Elizabeth, 1968).

A survey was conducted in the developing countries, for example, currently 1 person in 15 is aged 75 or over, but forecasts for the year 2020 predict that the figure will have narrowed to 1 in 10. (Walker & Mathy, 1997) At a time when older people are often portrayed as a “‘burden’” on the financial resources of the state, it is important for both those in the caring professions and the aging individuals themselves to understand not just the losses that may occur with advancing years, but also the positive aspects and potential for further development.(Gomez, 2009)

Investigator observed that various socio demographic variables are affecting ego integrity among male and female geriatric population.

Exploring the links between integrity, hope among male and female geriatric population which has been studied extremely in western countries and the great number of variables acknowledge
that it is a complex problem. This problem is to be explored in order to help the geriatric people to have better quality of life, which will promote them to alleviate their sufferings and gain self-confidence.

Late adulthood should be a time in a person’s life where they feel fulfilled. They can look back on their memories and be happy with the way they have lived their life. Now a days too many elderly people are not satisfied and look depressed. Most fear of death of either loved one or for themselves

It is the crucial time for elderly people to get through one of the best, yet the toughest part of their mortal life.

This motivated the investigator to find out the ego integrity level among male and female geriatric population through comparative study, also the investigator is interested to find out the relationship of ego integrity among male and female geriatric population with selected socio demographic variables.