**To what extent does modern society undermine the elderly?**

**Type of question: Extent of Agreement**

**Thinking aspect:**

For this question, it is crucial for the student to expand upon the facet of modern society into angles such as economic, healthcare, technology and values. An academic relationship must be established to link an aspect of modern society to an aspect in daily life that concerns the elderly to ascertain the proposition. For example, the rising costs of products and services may affect healthcare and retirement costs of elderly. As for the extent of agreement, the student must examine the extent of agreement by stating the limitations of the supporting view. Finally, the conclusion should include the key determinant into the final analysis so as to demonstrate the presence of differing outcomes.

**Introduction:**

The fast paced and technologically advanced society of today has produced tremendous changes in our daily lives. Consequently, such influence extends to the elder class of society and has disrupted their comforting lives before. It is no surprise then that debates emerge regarding the extent of impact of aspects of modern society on daily lives on the elderly. Traditionalists assert that technological, economic and social aspects of modern society undermine the harmonious lifestyle of the elderly. Yet, technocrats argue that government policies are implemented to negate the impact of aspects of modern society on the elderly. In view of such polarising perspectives, an in-depth introspection of the multidimensional aspect of modern society is required before a nuanced conclusion can be arrived at.

**Main body**

Point 1 - Supporting view 1:

Modern society undermines the elderly as rising costs of living affect the retirement plans and healthcare costs of the elderly, creating unwanted economic pressure.

Point 2 - EOA 1:

However, the above view holds a modicum of truth as there are institutional and government policies implemented to ensure financial capability of the elderly to cope with rising costs of services.

Point 3 - Supporting view 2:

Modern society also undermines the elderly as an increasing individualistic culture restricts the crucial social and community support the elderly needs, creating social enclaves.

Point 4 - EOA 2:

Yet, it can be argued that modern society does not undermine the elderly as there are the provision of welfare and elderly-friendly communities to address the social support the elderly needs.

Point 5 - Supporting view 3:

Lastly, modern society undermines the elderly as the IT-inclined environment reveals the technological gap of the elderly so they are unable to function and interact with others effectively in society,

Point 6 - EOA 3:

However, it can be argued that modern society does not undermine the elderly as the provision of media literacy and computing courses by the government address the technological gap of the elderly and allow them to effectively thrive in a digitalised age.

**Conclusion:**

In retrospect we can observe that modern society has influenced diverse aspects of the lives of the elderly. The extent that modern society undermines the elderly depends on the pace of modern life in that particular society and the rate of implementation of social and technological support schemes nationwide. For some elderly, the effective utilisation of institutional mechanisms to aid their daily living may realise that the disruption of aspects of modern society is limiting.

**Essay Question 1**

**Do you think it is better to be young or old?**

Introduction

Ageism has become one of the many forms of discrimination affecting modern society. A form of social discrimination against age, such attitudes involve the stereotyping of two particular groups in society, youths and the elderly. Youths are dismissed as having certain traits of impulsiveness, or being inexperienced, while the elderly perceived to be incapable of taking care of themselves and are seen as burdens to society. Such attitudes have serious ramifications on all levels of society as they affect social attitudes, cultural perceptions and government policies towards both groups. The rise of ageism may be attributed to a shift in mindsets towards a valorization of the youths and it is necessary to point out that popular usage of the term ‘ageism’ refers specifically to the aged rather than the young. In light of this, it is better to be young in society today.

**Main Body**

Point 1: Opposing view – worse to be young, better to be old

**Worse to be young**

* Due to the aging population, the youths are faced with the prospect of having to support many elderly dependents eventually.
* There is much stress today among the young today – whether academically or in the workplace. Due to globalization, competition today is even stiffer than it was in the past due to the introduction of foreign talent, and the option of outsourcing.

**Better to be old**

* Retirees can now relax and enjoy life, slowing down after working hard for many years.

Point 2: Rebuttal – why opposing view is wrong

* Though there may be the problem of an aging population, especially in many developed societies, governments around the world are increasingly aware of this and are implementing measures to overcome this problem – whether in terms of providing better pension schemes or creating an environment which is more elderly-friendly. This will mean that the future burden on the young is being lessened.

Point 3: Supporting view – better to be young, worse to be old

**a) Worse to be old**

* The fear of aging in an increasingly youth obsessed culture creates an irrational prejudice against the elderly.
  + Creation of a culture that valorizes youth and denigrates old age.
  + Advertisements, the mass media and popular culture are filled with images of the young or are predominantly focused on reversing one’s age by trying to look younger.
  + Creation of an irrational fear of old age, disease, disability and other ailments that have come to characterize old age.
  + The irony lies in that many developed countries have reached healthcare standards that allow one to age healthily and gracefully. Yet, the concept of becoming old is still a frightening concept to many.
* The construction and dissemination of knowledge is no longer tied to age or experience, leading to our dismissal of the knowledge that age can bring.
  + Historically, old age was venerated because it connoted experience, maturity and wisdom.
  + The democratization of knowledge and the accessibility of information because of the age of the Internet and the printing press have made the veneration of old age obsolete and irrelevant.
  + This is a growing problem because neglecting the experience that age can give only indicates a throwback to society where marginalized groups were silenced because they were deemed unimportant.
  + We form a new benchmark for measuring useful and irrelevant knowledge based on arbitrary stereotypes of age.

Point 4: Better to be young

* More opportunities today to develop oneself due to globalisation and technological advances. One can further one’s studies abroad or work in international firms to broaden one’s horizons. The young today can also take online courses as well.
* Seen as being more technologically adept, the young today are given many opportunities in the workplace. They are also perceived to be more creative and flexible, something which many firms and employers now appreciate in their staff.

Conclusion

In today’s society, due to the nature of ageism, it seems to be better to be young than old. Though the young inevitably have their own burdens and face their own challenges compared to the old, younger people are given more opportunities and treated more favourably.