

VIOLENCE AGAINST AGEING POPULATION: GLOBAL OVERVIEW WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SRI LANKA

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Abstract: *The main aim of this paper is to examine the situation of elderly abuse globally with special reference to Sri Lanka and identify the key factors for the issue. This paper draws upon secondary data and it also includes five case studies from Sri Lanka, as this is an ongoing research project. The main problem in researching this issue is the lack of accurate data due to elderly people not speaking out against abuse by their caregivers or family. However, with the prevailing data it is estimated that nearly 1 in 6 elderly persons over 60 years of age experience some kind of violence globally. In Sri Lanka, it is far more under-reported than globally due to a variety of social and cultural reasons. The elders' living arrangements is one of the main reasons for this issue. Because, many elders live with their adult children and therefore the elders view themselves as having no other option but to tolerate their situation rather than complicate it further. The elders experience violence within their own homes and it is the female elders who are subjected to relatively more violence in Sri Lanka.*

Keywords: Ageing, Violence, Sri Lanka, Reasons

Introduction

An ageing population is a widespread phenomenon across the world with Sri Lanka being one of the countries with the most rapidly increasing older age demographic in South Asia. Population ageing is defined as a “process by which older individuals become a proportionally larger share of the total population. If 10% of the total populations are over 60 or 7% over 65 years of age, it is considered as population ageing” (Lommen, 2010). For instance, currently 12% of the global population is represented by elderly people aged 60 years or above and two thirds of the elderly live in developing countries (Rohland, 2009). In Sri Lanka, the population aged 60 and above has increased from 9.8% in 2000 to 12.4% in 2012. It is projected to be increased 21.5% in 2030 (Department of Census and statistics report, 2014). Normally, in most societies ageing people are considered as an asset to the society in many aspects. Yet, if there is a significant shift in age demographics leading to the proportions of those over 60 years of age being close to the other age categories, it may lead to pressure at both individual as well as societal levels.

Taking care of adults is the main challenge faced by many societies due to the changing of natural channel or role of family in taking care of elders (Silva, 2004; UNFPA, 2012). That apart, when accounting for growing elderly demographic and related social issues, the main focus has been on the major economic and health burden upon the society. These issues affect elders as well as the society and both parties' issues need to be addressed similarly in order to have a healthier environment in the society. However, in research and policy making discourse, attention has been mainly focused on the challenges faced by a country or a society rather than

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