

HEALTH CONDITION AND STATUS OF EMPLOYMENT OF THE ELDERLY PEOPLE IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract: Ageing of population will affect the size and the composition of the labour force as the age structure undergoes changes with the ageing process. In the developed world, 'healthy ageing' and 'active ageing' are very common terms used when speaking about ageing of individuals. The communities and the country can utilize the invaluable life experience and the accumulated knowledge of the elderly people by creating appropriate working environments for the elderly. The elderly people who are willing to be engaged in income generating activities need to be supported. Therefore, this paper attempts to identify the economically active elderly people by their health status and district, which will be an important measure in the process of evidence-based policy making in connection with the ageing issues. The data source for this study is the Household Income and Expenditure Survey - 2010 conducted by the Department of Census and Statistics. Descriptive and multi various analysis used to describe the status of the elderly by district. This study reveals that the participation in economic activities of the urban sector elderly are comparatively lower than the other two sectors. The estate sector elderly are reported to be healthy. The economically active status of the elderly people reveals that Monoragala, Anuradhapura, Batticaloa and Matale districts have comparatively more percentages of economically active elderly people.

Keywords: Economically active, Ageing index, Health status

Introduction

Ageing of population is common in all developed and developing countries, which have had declining fertility and mortality. Sri Lanka is one of the fastest ageing countries in the world, with an ageing index of 21.1 in 1981, 30.5 in 2001 and 48.8 in 2012. This increasing index can be termed as the increase in the ratio of elderly people to the children. Ageing of population results in increased number of elderly people with shrinking of the labour force, and this implies an increase in economic dependence and it becomes a major determinant of economic development. Increasing elderly population also affects the society. The development process in the world has resulted in weakening inter-generational support in societies particularly in caring for the elders. Fulfilling the needs of the elderly was the moral responsibility of the family and relatives in the traditional society. However, increasing trend of women's employment makes taking care of elderly people a burden in the families. The elderly people are not a burden to society; country should make use of their services and life experiences in achieving sustainable development goals.

'Healthy ageing' and 'active ageing' are very common terms used when speaking about ageing of individuals. Healthy ageing is keeping healthy living, while ageing and the term 'active ageing' implies participation of elderly people in the society and the economy. This may be in the family and/or in income making employments or voluntary services. In the old age, individuals reduce their working hours if employed

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