Socio- Economic background of the female inmates of elderly homes in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Population ageing is a phenomenon that occurs due to the lower death rate and lower birth rate. Due to the decrease of death and birth rates, ageing is a result of the demographic transition. Among the Asian countries, Sri Lanka has come to the first place, which is having a higher rate in the demographic transition. There is a 13.2% of elderly dependency ratio in Sri Lanka according to the newest reports (2015) of Census of Statistics. So as to that this study aimed to investigate the Socio and Economic factors which influenced those elderly women to be at the elderly homes special reference to Iring Thilakarathna elders home in Imbulgoda. Simple random sampling method has used as the sampling technique in order to select 25 elderly women as the sample. A questionnaire, which had 19 questions, has used to find the factors, which influenced them to stay in elderly home such as poverty, no one to care, misbehavior of their laws, freedom etc. Statistical techniques such as tables, graphs, percentages, Chi-square test and correlation etc. have been used to analyze the data. According to findings most of them were poor in their economic situation and they do not like to bother their children as well. The majority of those elderly women were in the age group of 70-80 and they believe staying in an elderly home allowed them to keep away from the problematic background of their home. According to the results, specially the attitude problems of their children and their lives styles have thrown their older mothers to the such a place and they have created a background that those mothers are loneliness and helpless though they have number of children.

Keywords: *Ageing, Elderly women, Elder's home, Socio-Economic factors, Influence*

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Introduction

Population ageing is a phenomenon that occurs due to the lower death rate and lower birth rate. Due to the decrease of death and birth rates ageing is a result of the demographic transition. Among the Asian countries, Sri Lanka has come to the first place which is having a higher rate in the demographic transition. According to this theory, society's transition from high birth and high death rates to low birth and low death rates that occur as a part of the economic development of a country. There is a 13.2% of elderly dependency ratio in Sri Lanka according to the newest reports of Census of Statistics 2014. During the last few decades the total size and the age structure of the Sri Lankan population have been changed irreversible. The aging population in Sri Lanka has started to grow up rapidly since 1992 and this rapid changing of the country's population since this will weigh heavily to the Sri Lankan economy. And also the Sri Lanka's population will peak at 21.9 million in 2031 from its 19.7 million size in 2006 (De Silva, 2007). Due to the ratio of the elderly dependents has increased and it made some circumstances in Sri Lankan economy. An increasing dependency will slow down the economy of a country. According to the literature it reveals that the ageing in Sri Lanka influence on the economy in various aspects (Sanderathne, 2014). Sri Lanka's demographic transition is apparent not only in the age pyramid but also in the disease profile of the country too. Due to the aging population government has to spend more from the national income on health, pensions and other compensation of the elderly people (Sanderathne, 2014). Not only that the aged population who are not beneficiaries of a pension fund would normally depend on their savings or their children's income for consumption spending (Prasannath, 2014: De Silve, 2007). Such a tendency will affect the economy at macro level because there will be a decline in the total domestic savings. In such situations, if domestic savings are insufficient for investment, alternative sources have to be sought. And on the other hand those who are in retirement tended to pay law tax payments because they are not working. As a result of this the working people have to pay higher taxes. This could create a disincentive to work and for firms to invest and there could be a fall in productivity as well as in growth. In this case Sri Lankan government have to use some kind of actions to sort out this aging problem by using some methods such as introducing new policies which are aimed at increasing participation of older workers and to make the retirement age more flexible, and also to

improve the skills and the choices available to the older workers, the government could identify the obstacles for employment of older workers and provide suitable solutions to outcome from those obstacles and then it will help to use the aging population in a beneficiary way to the economy of the country.

Ageing population has become a socio-economic and cultural problem for developed countries as well. The difference is the way they answer for the ageing problem. The developed countries have introduced the elderly homes as a solution to the above discussed ageing population, but when it comes to the Asian countries it is totally different. Due to the high expenses and their busy lives styles most children lodged their parents in elders' homes. There are number of elders homes in Sri Lanka which mainly categorized into two types as governmental and non-governmental (Mendis, 2006). According to the literature (Srilankadara Society, 2016) most of the parents gained help from elders homes because they are rejected by their families and children, left destitute due to the death of their husband or wife, they are from disadvantaged homes and too poor and week to look after themselves.

So this study draws attention to the "Socio-economic background of the elderly women in elders' home regarding Iring Thilakarathne elderly home in Imbulgoda."

Limitations

I. Due to the lack of time and financial feasibility it couldn't be able to get a sample which represent all the elders' homes in Sri Lanka. Therefore Iring Thilakarathne women's elderly home in Imbulgoda has selected as the sample.

II. The result of this research may not be completely generalized because the sample is restricted to the Imbulgoda Iring Thilakarathne elders' home.

Design of the study

In this research, 25 elderly women have selected as the sample. The sample has selected by using simple random sampling method and the secondary data

has collected through the secondary sources as internet, books, papers, articles etc.

Most of the collected data are qualitative. Therefore, in here qualitative analyzing method has used as example logistic regression, chi-square and other qualitative data analysis methods.

Due to the accuracy of statistical treatment here SPSS 21 version has used as the statistical package. When data graphically displaying, SPSS fails to display them in an expect quality. Thus as an alternative Ms. Excel package used for the analyzing.

Methods and instruments of data gathering

Most popular data gathering method is used in this research as interview-based questionnaire method. Both are used in here because it is very important to observe the reaction of the particular member of the sample. Observation is the best method in social sciences researches to gather data.

The questionnaire consists 19 questions with three (3) open ended questions to know their personal ideas and suggestions. Tried to collect data regarding socio and economic background of the elderly women in the elders' home through the interview-based questionnaire.

Data analyzing

Demographic background of the sample

The sample consists 25 elderly women. All of them are Sri Lankan Sinhalese and Buddhist women. 52% of them belongs to the primary education level and 44% are belonging to the secondary education level. There are 4% of elderly women do not have an educational background due to their personal matters. The respondents in the sample belong to following districts as Colombo, Galle, Gampaha, Kaluthara, Kandy and Matara. The majority of them (68%) are in Gampaha district and 84% elderly women are married and 16% of them are unmarried.

Reasons for living in an elder's home

According to the following graph (Graph 1), the major reason is, there is no one to protect those elderly women (56%). More than one out of four (1/4) of the respondents of the sample accepted that, "do not want to bother for their children ", "neglected by the children" and "other" are as the minor reasons for why they came to stay in an elders home.

Figure 1. Reasons for living in an elder's home
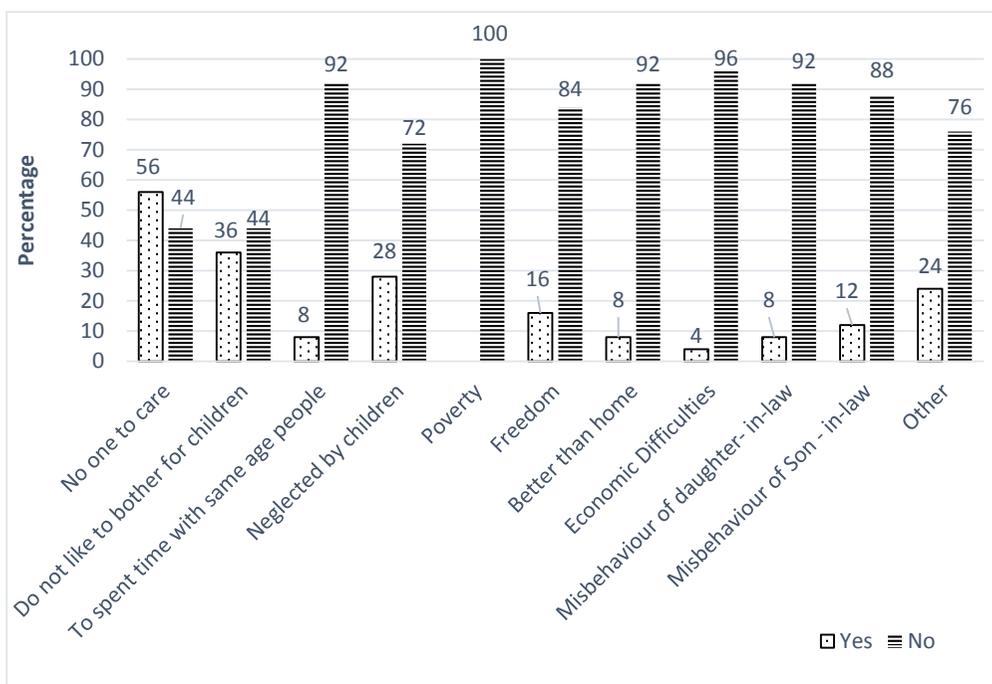
Source: Sample survey results, 2016

Most of the respondents do not agree with following reasons which let the elders to live in an elder's home. According to their view those are not reasonable to let them to stay such a place. Those reasons are as follows,

➢ To spent time with same age people (92%)
➢ Freedom (84%)
➢ Better than home (92%)
➢ Economic difficulties (96%)
➢ Misbehavior of daughter-in-law (92%)

> ➢ Misbehavior of son-in-law (88%)

56% of the elders said, that they haven't anyone to care even though their husbands alive. The odds of saying that they haven't anyone to care as their husbands are dead and that gives the value as 3.75 (See Table 1. Risk Estimates). Therefore death of the husband of those elderly women is not a reason for agreeing that they haven't anyone to care.

Table 1. Risk Estimates

Comparison	Odds Ratio	95% Confidence Interval	
		Lower	Upper
Odds Ratio for Reason A (yes / NO)	3.750	.325	43.313
For cohort Life Partner = Alive	3.000	.366	24.577
For cohort Life Partner = Dead	.800	.532	1.202
N of Valid Cases	22		

Source: Sample survey results, 2016

Also the number of children died and agreeing to the reason that they haven't anyone to care is not related. That can be proven using the following logistic regression model.

Model,
Y = Are you agreeing to the reason that you haven't anyone to care(Yes/No)
x = Number of children died

Table 2. Significance of the model

	Chi-square	df	Sig.
Step	.281	1	.596
Block	.281	1	.596
Model	.281	1	.596

Source: Sample survey results, 2016

Table 3. Estimated Model

Variable	β	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp (β)
Number of children died	-.539	1.029	.274	1	.601	.583
Constant	.693	.866	.641	1	.423	2.000

Source: Sample survey results, 2016

According to the table 2 the model created is not significant ($x^2 = 0.281, p = 0.596$). Due to that there is no significant relationship exist between agreeing to the reason that elders haven't anyone to care and the number of children died. Consequently, it can conclude that died number of family members are not a reason for admitting that elders haven't anyone to care.

Age limit of elderly women's which they came to the elder's home

According to the study, the minimum age limit of the elderly women who came to this elderly home is 50 and the majority of them belongs to 70-80 age category (48%). Hence, it is clear that after the age 50 there is a tendency that elderly woman would throw into an elder's home. As the age limit increases the tendency increases rapidly. For instance, according to the graph after the age limit 50-60 as the age limit increased to 60-70 the percentage of elderly women who entered in to this elders home increased by 225% ($\frac{36}{16} \times 100 = 225\%$).

Table 4. Age limit of elderly women which they came to the elders' home

Age Category	Frequency	Percentage
50-60	4	16.0
60-70	9	36.0
70-80	12	48.0
Total	25	100.0

Source: Sample survey results, 2016

Relationship between the age they came and the reason for stay in an elderly home

To test the relationship chi-square test has been done. The results are as follows.

Tested Hypotheses

H_{1a} : Age they came and the reason (no one to care) variables are not independent.

H_{1b} : Age they came and the reason (do not like to bother for children) variables are not independent.

H_{1c} : Age they came and the reason (to spent time with same age people) variables are not independent.

H_{1d} : Age they came and the reason (neglected by children) variables are not independent.

H_{1e} : Age they came and the reason (poverty) variables are not independent.

H_{1f} : Age they came and the reason (freedom) variables are not independent.

H_{1g} : Age they came and the reason (better than home) variables are not independent.

H_{1h} : Age they came and the reason (economic difficulties) variables are not independent.

H_{1i} : Age they came and the reason (misbehavior of daughter-in-law) variables are not independent.

H_{1j} : Age they came and the reason (misbehavior of Son-in-law) variables are not independent.

H_{1k} : Age they came and the reason (other) variables are not independent.

Table 5. Chi-square test results

x^2 value	p-value (2-tailed)	Cramer's V value	Result
4.144	0.126*	0.407	H_{1a} Rejected
3.299	0.192*	0.363	H_{1b} Rejected
2.355	0.308*	0.307	H_{1c} Rejected
0.198	0.906*	0.089	H_{1d} Rejected
3.921	0.152*	0.404	H_{1e} Rejected
8.466	0.015*	0.582	H_{1f} Accepted
0.468	0.791*	0.137	H_{1g} Rejected
1.128	0.569*	0.212	H_{1h} Rejected
2.355	0.308*	0.307	H_{1i} Rejected
0.800	0.670*	0.179	H_{1j} Rejected
0.786	0.675*	0.177	H_{1k} Rejected

Note: * = 0.05 alpha level

Source: Sample survey results, 2016

According to the chi-square test results there is only one significant relationship. That relationship exist between Age they came to the elders home and the reason (freedom) variables. As the Cramer's V = 0.582, there is a moderate relationship between those two variables.

Impact of their economic condition on embedding into elder's home

No income

According to the result, 92% of the respondents do not have an income and only 4% of them have an income. Therefore it shows that those 92% has to depend on their children or they are not self-sufficient. So it may be a cause that why those elderly women has come to the elders home.

Children's bad economic condition

There is a total of 55 children for these elderly women. From that 7 of them are dead. Which means only 48 of them are alive. Among them only 35

children have jobs. But only 4 of them are doing white[5] collar jobs. The rest of them are doing less earning jobs such as pink collar[6] (3), Blue collar[7] (28). As a result of that, most of the children haven't a strong economy to care their mothers. But according to the results, 96% of elderly women have said **no** to the reason that their economic difficulties let them to lodge in an elder's home. Thus there is a mismatch between these two factors.

Attitude about being in an elder's home

91.7% of elders live in this elders' home with their preferences. Only 8.3% of them are living without their preferences. Also, all the elders have agreed to the fact that elders home is a better place to live rather than living with their children. 82.6% of the elders do not like to live with their children again. It may be because that they have certain benefits from living in an elders' home but can't get those benefits from living with their children.

Figure 2. Social and other benefits
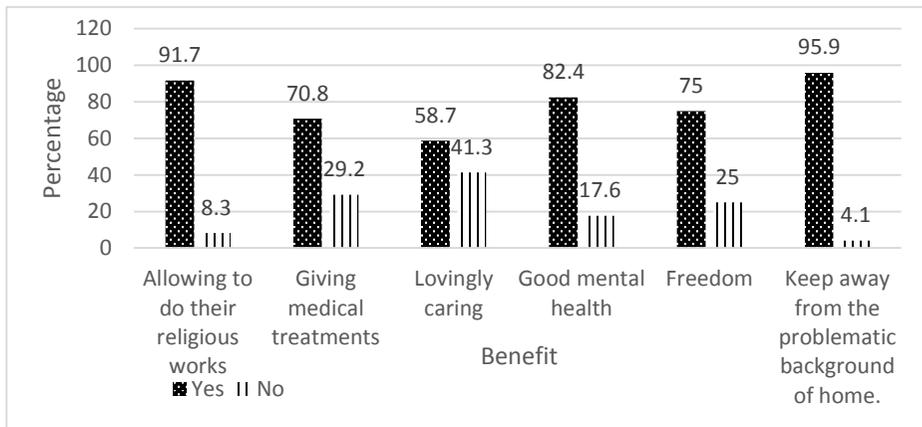
Source: Sample survey results, 2016

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[5] White Collar Worker is a salaried professional, typically referring to general office workers and management. It originates from color of dress shirts worn by professional and clerical workers.

[6] Pink Collar Worker is employed in a job that is traditionally considered to be women's work and is often low-paid. Example: Librarian, maid, flight attendant, receptionist, secretary, etc.

[7] Blue Collar Worker is a member of the working class, who performs manual labor and earns an hourly wage. It originates from the popularity that blue color enjoys among manual laborers.

Plus most of the elder's (95.9%) don't like to live in home because they want to keep away from the problematic background of their home. Problematic background of a home can affect their mental health. But being in an elder's home has helped them to improve their mental health to a good position. That is why more than 80% of elders claim that they are benefited with good mental health.

Conclusion

The foremost reason for living in an elder's home is that elderly women haven't anyone to care. However, overhead reason is not related with their husband's death or their child's death. Which means that the number of died family members is not a cause for claiming that they haven't anyone to care. But the behavior and attitude of children towards their older mothers are the causes of claiming that they haven't anyone to care. More than 80% of elderly women do not like to live with their children again and more than 90% of elderly women do not benefited by keeping away from the problematic background of their home, prove that their children's attitude and the behavior towards their mothers are the reason for claiming that they don't have anyone to care.

According to the research results, children of these elderly women's haven't the strong economic background to subsist their mothers. 88% of their children are employed as a pink or blue collar worker. Therefore, most of the children have an income which is only sufficient to subsist their family. Plus 92% of elderly women haven't a way of income. Consequently, as a conclusion, economic difficulties are the main reason for embedding in an elder's home.

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