

Feminization of Ageing in Sri Lanka and its Socio-economic Impacts

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The ageing population is one of the serious demographic issues in Sri Lanka and it directly influences the economic growth of the country. The Root cause of population ageing is rapid decline in fertility. The process of ageing of the population is a by-product of a decline in fertility and the significant rise in longevity. The number of females of the elderly population is higher than of males. As female life expectancy is higher than male life expectancy, the socio-economic impact of population ageing on women is relatively high. Thus, this study attempts to examine the socio-economic impacts of aging population with special attention on female elderly. The study uses secondary data from several World Bank reports and reports of the Department of Census and Statistics. Bivariate and univariate analysis have been used for the analysis. Females are a less privileged segment of elderly than their male counterparts. Among elderly women, there is a significant proportion of unmarried females. Women are more likely than men to be widowed and less likely to re-marry. In addition to women's higher life expectancy, they are often vulnerable to have health issues than elderly males. Since the probability of occurring the male partners' death before that of the female partner is high, a significant number of widows among elderly women can be seen. Thus, more aged females have to live nearly about 8 to 9 years without getting their partners' security. It is found that mental disability is also much higher among the aged females. When considering the literacy rate, older women are low achievers often than their male counterparts. On top of all, most of the female elders do not have a permanent income source to meet their day today needs. Therefore, while enjoying a longer longevity, elderly females are more likely to have various types of socio-economic issues. Few policy implications and recommendations have been discussed in this paper. Providing some incentives to elderly females, increasing the retirement age, establishing elderly day care centers, identifying special health needs of older women and giving proper training to elderly care providers are some possible policy action needed address the issues related to elderly women in Sri Lanka.

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