

F-04 : Physically disabled in Sri Lanka

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Physically disabled have demographic, economic and social implications. They impose moral and financial responsibilities on the society with regard to their maintenance.

Past data on physical disability show that many types - blindness, deafness, cripples (hands and legs) to a greater extent occur from birth. At subsequent and higher ages physical disablement occurs mainly due to accidents, violence and sickness. It is believed that recent political and ethnic disturbances which led to violence, caused a large number of disabled youth who have social and economic implications on the population as a whole.

In Sri Lanka, not many studies had been undertaken with respect to physical disablement and even the data available is very limited. Data from population censuses (1946, 1963, 1981) are comparable to some extent. Of these, the 1981 census has collected fairly comprehensive data on physical disablement.

In this study the 1981 census data on physical disablement with respect to the following are examined. (1) Types and causes of disablement, (2) Age and sex differentials, (3) Disabilities by birth and at subsequent ages, (4) Provincial variations.

The variations can be grouped according to urban, rural & estate sectors. Demographic variations within these socio-economic groups were also examined.

The number of blind persons is indicated below:

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Urban	835	667	1502
Rural	4010	3304	7314
Estate	231	284	515
Total	5076	4255	9331