

CHALLENGERS, PROTECTION, AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF ELDERS IN SRI LANKAN SOCIETY

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Introduction

Aging population has become a major problem in present Sri Lanka. Growing Aging population with, 25.7% of the total population expected to be over the age of 60 by the year 20501 in Sri Lanka. This rapid population growth affects in numerous ways in Sri Lankan context. Considering elderly care it is still the family unit takes the responsibility to care and protection of their elders. In the present with the changers of family takes various shapes. In this context, among these changers transition of the extended family in to nuclear family has created enormous issues related to protection of elders. Along this statement furthermore, female who have been traditionally identified as caregivers for the elders. With the enhancement of education, job opportunities role of the women has changed. "The number of children available for elderly care has also declined due to the reduction in fertility levels which results in fewer children being available to take on the responsibility of careering for the elderly, potentially for a long period of time". When children migrating to urban areas and abroad seeking employment and greener pastures. In such a situation the elderly become vulnerable due lack of financial assistance, proper foods, Health issues, and increasing loneliness. This kind of factors has effected for developing elders home for the care of them. And also the challengers such as loneliness, Social isolation, Retirement, widowhood, Social insecurity, Mental and Health issues, being a single, Economic insecurity, exploitation are directly affected for the elders who are living in the world. Hence, the government has implemented some National level programmes for protecting them. "The Degree of the social

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integration is a critical aspect of the well-being of the elderly population. We can imagine the situation of elderly persons who is isolated, lonely and cut off from family and social networks. The first shock may come from retirement but loss of spouse, separation from family, neglect by children, inability to move around and so on can aggravate the situation". Facing with this issues intensify the problem of aging population in Sri Lankan society. In fact to find out the ways how can get steps to socially integrate them was one of objectives of this study.

Research problem

Elders are spending their life having with various obstacles and challengers in present. "Can elders smoothly maintain their challengers and social relationship while integrating to society?"

Objectives

Considering the main objectives of this study, it was discussed under three main points. These objectives were Ensure protection of elders from neglect, all types of physical, mental abuse and social cultural and economic life with absolutely no discrimination. Identify the challengers that elders are facing in their day to day life and identify that how can they socially integrate in modern context.

Methodology

Choosing a proper method is caused for the output accuracy. Mainly case study, quantitative and qualitative methods were used in this study. Three types of data collecting techniques such as questionnaires, in-depth interviews and observations were used to collect primary data. Randomly 100 Senior citizens who are over the 60 years were used as the sample. Basically 10 cases were selected out of 100 elders in North central province.

Discussion

It was found that the elders who are living in the Sri Lankan Society faced number of challengers within the social integration process. Old age is accompanied by role change and role loss. Transformations in occupational, family and community role decline in later life. Major challengers and how they smoothly maintain their social relationship no discriminations has mentioned bellow.

Loneliness: In accordance of New York Times, 25th of March 2009 Quoted “Loneliness leads to poorer physical and mental health” High degree of loneliness precipitates suicidal ideation and para – suicide and dementia. Furthermore, it results in a decline of well-being and has an adverse effect on physical health. Environmental factors like unpleasant experiences, migration of population, inter personal conflicts, lack of social contacts are directly affected for the loneliness. For the prevention of these kinds of situations keeping self-busy, sharing feelings, maintaining interactions, staying in contact with family and friends have suggested as possible interventions.

Social Isolation: Belonging, Quality of Social relations, Social contacts, Engagements are the key attributes of Social isolation. Directly Social isolation impacts the health and behavioural habits of elders and also those who have poor social connections and do not participate in social activities are at an increased risk of cognitive decline. Depression and death from suicide is resulted of Social isolation. Reference to an article published, again in the Daily Mirror on.

September 4, titled in “Lankans 71 years and above are the most suicidal: police is made.” This highlighted data tabled in parliament by Minister of Law and Order, SagalaRathnayaka. It reported “Suicides in Sri Lanka are highest among persons of age of 71 and above, according to data compiled by police for the past three years. In this age category 307 elders have taken their own lives, in comparison to a total of 3,058 suicides recorded in 2015. Considering the intervention for social isolation are not

refined yet. But through the various literatures some suggestions can be identified.

Retirement: and also widowhood is increased some difficulties associated with mobility and daily activities, increasing illness conditions, decline mental health, probability of taking a drug.

Findings

Many older women than the men live alone in their final years because their husbands have died or because separations. Social isolation was the main challenge that they have faced in their elderly life. When compared with men still it is the women who are engaged mostly in domestic works. Responsibilities of looking after their granddaughters and grandsons have taken from the women who are above 64 years. The findings revealed that both men and women those unemployed earlier, are currently engaged in earning their daily living. Most of the women who are above 70 years are suffering from chronic illnesses like diabetes, high blood pressure, arthritis, and some others.

Summary

Senior citizens who are living in the Sri Lanka are facing number of challengers in their day to day life. The traditional method of living arrangements of the elderly was to spend the evening of life with their younger son. With the innovations of education, attitudes, extended families into nuclear families have changed this conventional ways. But most of the elders are still maintaining their social relationship with no discriminations in Sri Lanka. As the Sri Lankan it is duty to protect the all the elders with no discriminations.

Keywords: Aging, Challengers, protection, Social integration

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