



Elderly Care Services :

A comparative study in Japan and Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Economic and social support and care of the elderly are changing in both Japan and Sri Lanka in view of breaking up of the traditional family system, changing lifestyles and activity patterns of young, adult and children. Elderly care services in Japan is well developed to cater to its growing number of elders who seeks care from outside the family. In Sri Lanka the Care services are emerging as a very prospective one due to the greater demand from its elderly population especially in the urban areas.

In Sri Lanka where family values are strong and government funding is limited, elderly support and services are still largely dependent on the family. The majority of Sri Lankan aged is engaged in agricultural or casual work even under uncertain conditions or low wages because of the inadequacy of family income and social security benefits. There is a growing demand in the state as well as private sector for social security benefits in Sri Lanka. In Sri Lanka, retirement income systems consists of pension schemes and provident funds both of which are not very successfully run

Sri Lanka and Japan are regarded as a rapid population ageing societies in Asia under different demographic and socio – economic scenarios. The ageing process of the two countries derive several socio-economic implications, however the resistance to the consequences of population ageing depends on the economic and social strength of the country.

It was observed that the Japanese aged were strengthened by well promoted social security benefits but many demands for reforms will be expected with the rapid

increase of aged people. Thus Sri Lankan aged is relatively poor and mostly dependent. The changing co-residence and familial support in Japan has also decreased to some extent but the economic and social base accompanying high modernization, urbanization and industrialization make resistance to mediate the issues at family level.

The aim of this study is to ascertain the development of elderly care services sector in Japan and Sri Lanka in comparative perspective considering their different demographic and socio-economic conditions. And also to investigate what extend the elderly population is benefited by these services. The data derived from primary and secondary sources in both countries. A sample survey among the registered elderly care centers was carried out in Sri Lanka.

It was found that Japan has been grappling with their ageing population for a longer period of time. They have directed their efforts in establishing a high-level government agency, usually at the ministerial level, to focus and coordinate manpower and resources in dealing with ageing issues. Their national policies and plans of action are also more elaborate in content.

Sri Lanka faces a number of obstacles to the implementation of plans and policies on ageing. Continued low priority of the topic and lack of funds rank the highest, followed by a lack of policymaking knowledge and shortage of staff and training for implementation. The lack of inter-departmental cooperation and coordination is also noted.