

## **Emerging Focus on an Ageing Society in Sri Lanka in the Context of Demographic Transition**

Manori K. Weeratunga

Department of Demography, Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo

Sri Lanka is experiencing rapid demographic transition similar to countries like Japan, South Korea and China while European countries started experiencing this event several decades ago. The rapid decline of fertility and mortality rates along with migration in Sri Lanka, have reshaped the age-sex structure of the population. This rapid ageing population can be regarded as the by-product of demographic transition. Demographic ageing in Sri Lanka is associated with the changing nature, structure and function of the family which has been occurring simultaneously in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka's rapidly ageing population has important socio-economic implications and factual challenges for the government and older people themselves. The Sri Lankan elderly have traditionally been almost totally dependent on family care, and a key policy question is whether the transition from traditional to modern family will change the availability of traditionally predominant elderly care. This study examines the effects of demographic transition on the emergence of an ageing society and its effect on elderly care. The study used mixed methodology based on primary and secondary data deriving from a survey of 300 elderly households. This study revealed co-residence with an adult child/ren in their own home is the most common living arrangement but there is an increasing trend of elderly living alone. Moreover, this study has discovered that demand for elderly care is increasingly based on their economic, health and family status. Long-term care is one of the serious issues in society and hence needs more attention. Although there is an increasing demand for institutional care, the country still does not have a properly developed mechanism. However, this study showed most accepted care for elderly is family care. Therefore, Sri Lanka needs to identify real desires and limitations of elderly care and formulate a proper plan to ensure the well-being of the elderly population.

*Key words: Ageing society, demographic transition, elderly care*