

**A sociological analysis of the institutionalization of the elderly and the requirement for long-term care in non-fee levying institutions in Sri Lanka**

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Ageing as a social phenomenon has increasing relevance to the global population in the 21st century including Sri Lanka. Literature on the local context suggests that long term care for the elderly remains a rather elusive concept in the institutionalized health care system although its significance cannot be extinguished. The primary objective of the study was to identify the fundamental requirements for the elderly in long term care in non-fee levying institutions. This entailed an understanding of the present condition of non-fee levying institutions in Sri Lanka and the key challenges faced by the elderly in the need for long term care. The research field for the present study was based on two non-fee levying institutions that care for the elderly located in Colombo and Ratnapura. Of the total population, a purposive sample of 10 participants was chosen from the elderly populations. The primary method of data collection was through in-depth interviews which enabled the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the challenges encountered by the elderly in institutionalized long term care, followed by non-participant observations. Findings highlight that institutions for the elderly endorse a total institution concept where normal life becomes inaccessible to an individual. In addition, the life of elderly residents is restricted with the rules and regulations of the administration which disallow the fundamentals of long-term care. Moreover, it was evidenced by the staff and the residents of these homes that religious activities were given more priority and that the principles of autonomy and choice promoted by long term care are alienated in everyday practices.

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