

SOCIO ECONOMIC ISSUES OF ELDERLY POPULATION IN SRI LANKA: A COMPARISON BETWEEN RURAL AND URBAN SECTORS

H. R. Anulawathie Menike

Senior Lecturer, Department of Economics, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

anulamenike@yahoo.com

Abstract

The main objective of this paper is to ascertain as to what the main socio-economic problems faced by the elderly population of rural and urban sectors are. This study mainly based on primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected from 200 families including elderly population in rural and urban sectors. The study employed a descriptive statistical techniques such as, tables, graphs, percentages etc. for the data analysis. The findings of the study revealed that elderly population of the rural and urban sectors are facing numerous socio-economic issues. Ageing population has become helpless mainly by the factors such as low income levels, lesser savings, causing financial difficulties, decline of health conditions, and negligence of problems in the old age etc. Problems related to ageing population have become complicated in rural area due to inequality of the expansion of resources and institutional frame compare with the urban sector. Findings of the study revealed that the educational level of elders has caused a serious impact towards their income, savings and investments. 89% of the elders in the urban sector who are pensioners have retired from government service while it is 22% in the rural sector. Owing to this reason, the government will have to spend a vast amount of monthly in the future for the payment for pensions, with the increase of life expectancy of the people.

Keywords: Ageing population, rural, urban, socio-economic issues, Sri Lanka

INTRODUCTION

A tendency of a continuous increase in the population of Sri Lanka could be observed over a period of the past century. Such continuously increased and increasing population has caused a serious impact on the economy and developmental pursuits through different aspects. There are three different categories of population namely, child population, working population and aged population whereas the children and aged populations are regarded as dependent populations. Population of working age is an asset for any country. But it doesn't mean that other two dependent categories are not useful for the country. Child dependents are a category of valuable potential to be included into the category of workforce of the country in the future. Aged population also cannot be regarded as an invalid category because they have been exerting for the upkeep of the country's economy during their prime of life. However as a whole, when the number of dependents is increasing, financial resources that are to be used for alternative investments have to be dedicated for them. Therefore it caused to increase services such as education, health food subsidies, and payments of pensions and so on.

Although there was no remarkable increase in the gross domestic product, it is a noteworthy feature that Sri Lanka was able to reach the final stage of demographic transition within a short period. While this situation has especially led to change the age structure of the population in Sri Lanka, the population pyramid which existed with a broad base is changing gradually. As a result of the above, Sri Lanka will have to face a population pyramid with a large number of aged people in the near future. Sri Lanka being an Asian country, it inherits an exceptional cultural pattern, it could be mentioned that there are problems related to poverty, social welfare activities, social, religious and political, environmental, social attitudes and practices which are liable to change due to ageing of the population. Especially in Sri Lanka a vast number of aged people could be found in rural areas and due to this reason, aged population representing rural areas has caused a great problem. 3/4 of the aged population represents rural areas (Rathnayake and Siddhisena, 1998). A vast number of aged people living in rural areas relatively to that of the urban areas has led to several socio-economic problems because the development of rural areas are very low. The main objective of this study is to identify the nature of problems faced by aged people living in rural and urban areas while comparing the differences between such problems.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Through a study conducted by Choe in 1987, related to the Korean Republic, attention had been paid to income security and health facilities of the aged and regarding the importance of

social services. Poverty, mental and physical disabilities, isolation and disgust have been identified as the four main problems faced by the aged population (Choe, 1987).

In another survey conducted in 1989, Choe has discovered that more economically active aged people were found in the rural sector than in the urban sector in Korea. The main reason for this situation is that urban residents are engaged in government and corporation institutions and after retirement, they are unable to find any other employment spending an idle life, but the people living in rural areas are constantly engaged in agricultural activities maintaining their fortitude and robustness even in their late ages. The survey revealed another point that aged population in urban areas live on savings and investments after retirement more than the rural aged population.

Another study conducted by Yang in 1988, reveals that in China, the expenses of about 59% of the aged people are covered by their monthly pension payments or other gratuities but only 21% of the elderly are concerned about their children. In the rural sector 68% of the aged population depend on their children. The percentage of people who engage themselves in employments after retirement in china is about 35%.

In 1987 Ogawa had conducted a study related to ageing and socio-economic impacts in Japan. In this study, he has discussed about the workforce, capital stock and social security funds and their relative effects on the aged population. Ogawa reveals through this study that the economic development is so backward due to the increase of the aged population and that serious financial adverse effects have been caused grave impacts due to the increase of the expenditure on public health schemes, pension payment schemes and other similar investments (Ogawa 1987). Through another study conducted by De Silva in 1994, illustrates that after the decline of the traditional family system and with the emergence of nuclear family system and the problems that had to be faced by the elderly population and the increase of the dependents has caused an oppressive situation with more economical problems.

METHODOLOGY

Study was descriptive in nature. Primary and secondary data were useful in collecting quantitative data for the study. Primary data were collected through a field survey. This survey was carried out with the help of a formally prepared questionnaire presented to 200 household samples inclusive of 100 from the rural sector and another 100 from the urban sector. The sample was selected by simple random sampling method. Minuwangoda Divisional Secretariat Division was selected for the representation of the rural sector while Kelaniya Divisional Secretariat Division was selected representing the urban sector. Descriptive statistical method was adapted for data analysis.

EMPIRICAL RESULTS

Nature of Related Economic Problems of Ageing Population in the Study Area

By examining the economic situation of the aged population and of their household, it would be easier to identify the nature of the related economic problems. Especially, when the rural and urban sector are considered separately, the economic background of the aged population living in those areas may change and there will be a certain difference in the nature of problems that are taking place. Therefore, the main objective of this study is to ascertain the nature of economic problems related to aged population and to examine through a few selected variables whether there will be a difference in the nature of economic problems according to rural and urban classification. Although it is not possible to adapt the analyzed statistical information to compare the situation of Sri Lanka as a whole, at least it would suffice the possibility of gaining a certain amount of understanding about the problems of ageing population in rural and urban areas.

Age Distribution of Elderly People

This study about aged population is mainly concerned about the people of 60 years of age and over. Therefore, all the people involved in this study is of 60 years and the age groups of over 60 years of age. Elderly people are classified into two categories as “old” (60-74 years) and “old old” (over 75 years). If the number of “old old” category is more than the “old” category, it may create numerous problems for the country. Table 1 below, illustrates the age distribution elderly population in the study area.

Table No.1 Distribution of Elders As Per Gender, Residence And Age

Age (years)	Rural			Urban		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
60-64	4	7	11	3	19	22
65-69	12	14	26	7	17	24
70-74	13	16	29	9	18	27
75 & above	16	18	34	14	13	27
Total	45	55	100	33	67	100

More than half of the entire sample was males. In both rural and urban areas, as 69.5% of the entire population belongs to the age group of 60-74 years, they are considered as “old” people. The second category which is called “old-old” category were of people over 75 year of age with a percentage of 30.5% of the sample. However, about 1/3 of the elderly people of the selected area were old-old people that causes a severe problem as they have to depend on others. The reason is that the percentage of 30.5% of old-old people is more than the national level of

21.3%. Apart from the above, the problem intensifies further as 55% of the old- old category live in the rural area.

Level of Education of Aged People

Education level of the elderly people maintains a strong link with the earning income, consumption, and savings etc. At present, education is considered as the main aspect that controls the lives of most of the people and it also can be treated as a successful path for an employment and economic freedom. A further understanding could be easily gained about the educational level of the elders in the sample by referring to table no.2.

Table 2: Distribution of Elders as per Gender, Residence and Level of Education

Level Of Education	Rural			Urban		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Illiteracy	18	11	29	1	-	1
Grade 1 – 5	21	20	41	2	8	10
Grade 6 – 8	5	15	20	17	20	37
Grade 9 – 10	1	9	10	9	26	35
Grade 11 – 12	-	-	-	4	9	13
University	-	-	-	-	2	2
Profession	-	-	-	-	2	2
Total	45	55	100	33	67	100

Illiterate elders in the sample area are 15%. It implies that the majority of the elders over 60 years of age in the sample area are literate people. 25.5% out of the above 85% have achieved primary education. 80% of them represent the rural sector. They were born before the introduction of free education and they were unable to enjoy the facility of free education. Educational facilities before introduction of free education was only limited to the urban sector but such facilities were expanded towards the rural sector only after the introduction of free education.

However, during the period the elderly were schooling, the junior education was limited to Grade 8 only. Accordingly, it became clear that 28.5% have achieved junior education, while 22.5% and 6.5% of the elderly population have achieved secondary and tertiary education respectively. Only 2% have achieved university education and professional education. However, according to census and statistics of 1981, national literacy rate of the elderly population was 66.4%. Literacy rate of the elders in the sample being 85% reveals that their literacy rate is much higher than the national level. The reason is that the national literacy level is enumerated inclusive of the rural and urban areas of the entire island. In such a process, it mostly represents the rural areas including the difficult areas. But this study area doesn't include many rural areas.

The other reason is that as Gampaha district is situated very close to Colombo district educational facilities are more conveniently available for Gampaha residents. Therefore it could be assumed that due to above reasons that literacy rate of the elderly people of this area remains at a higher level.

Further the above table points out that literacy rate of males is higher than that of the females. It makes clear that these figures commensurate with the national statistics. The reason for this difference is that under the traditional social system that existed during that period, there was an attitude that females need not continue their education up to higher standards, resulting in more males being committed to follow higher studies. Therefore, the literacy rate of elderly males is higher than that of elderly females of this area. The literacy rate of elderly male is higher than that of elderly females of this area. Accordingly the literacy rate of elderly males and elderly females are 65.3% and 34.7% respectively. When the national literacy rate of males at 69.5 % and that of females at 63.3% are compared with the figures arrived at survey, it reveals that the literacy level of males remains at closer level and that of females remains at a much lower level. Reasons for this situation could be ascertained. More female representation has been received from the rural area of the sample relatively that of the urban area. Similarly the literacy level is low with a higher percentage of the elderly females. As the literacy proportion of the study is composed with the total of both sectors, female representation is more in the rural sector and the female literacy proportion of the entire sample remains at a low degree. As 63.3% of the entire elders with no literacy being females and the males are only 1/3 of the same category is a clear fact. This type of the difference could be seen in other categories too.

A special feature that can be noticed when the difference of the educational level between both sectors is considered 29% of elders in the rural sector cannot write while a large percentage of 41% have achieved only primary education. This position in the urban sector is 1% and 10% respectively. In the rural sector only 10% have gone beyond junior level of education and that only up to grade 10. No elders could be found in the rural sector who has studied beyond Grade 10. But in the urban sector 52% elders have studied beyond junior level of education. Among them 4% were Graduates and have achieved professional education. The reason for this situation is that the educational facilities in the urban areas are more than in the rural areas and also in the rural area, people are much familiar with agricultural activities and their interest for studies is at a lower degree.

As a whole, although the educational level of females is at a lower degree than that of the females in the urban sector is more than females of the rural area. Educational facilities in the urban sector is relatively more than in that of the rural sector and according to social values of the urban sector, people with higher educational level are well regarded. Achieving a higher

degree of education is a qualification for employment. People with higher status of employment are highly regarded in the society. As such females in the urban sector are well educated because parents exercise the utmost effort to educate their children. On the other hand there are certain noticeable factors that lead towards the low educational levels of females in the rural areas. According to the traditional customs of the past generations, there had been a belief that the role of the females should be confined to households. As the husband is operating the earring part, he has to achieve a suitable level of education. But the rural society doesn't expect to engage females in employment. Therefore, parents believe in the same old tradition that females need not be much educated. This not had been further strengthened by discussions and interviews. Most of the old aged women mentioned that according to their traditional customs, females need not study further. Their opinion is that females should be confined to households. Although, about 85% of the aged population in the entire sample have achieved some type of education the education level of the aged population in rural area is not satisfactory. This situation has caused a serious impact on their life styles with economic difficulties by way of livelihoods, consumptions, savings and in many other ways.

Marital Status of Aged People

Marital status effects a special impact on aged population certain special facts were revealed regarding the marital status of aged population were revealed through the survey of which the details are shown in Table no 3 below.

Table 3: Distribution of Elders as per Gender, Age and Marital Status

Age (years)	Married			Unmarried			Widow		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
60-64	-	25	25	1	-	1	5	1	6
65-69	6	24	30	-	-	-	13	7	20
70-74	4	29	33	1	-	1	17	5	22
75 & above	3	22	25	3	-	3	25	9	34
Total	13	100	113	5	-	5	60	22	82

According to the above table the number of unmarried aged people is negligible. But all unmarried aged people are females. No divorced or separated couples were found among the participants of the sample. This situation manifests that the affiliation and the bond within the families of Sri Lankan culture are still being continued uninterruptedly according to customs and ethical values of the society. The percentage of old unmarried people are females at 2.5% which is a lower percentage than that of the national level. Percentage of unmarried old aged females of the national level is 4.7%. These figures are more than the statistic of census and

statistics of 1963 and 1981 on unmarried old aged females. The percentage has increased from 0.12 % up to 4.7%. This situation reflects from the old aged population of the sample.

It is the usual accepted concept is that when people normally get windowed at their old age. In every age group widowed women could be seen more than widowers. Above table shows the same results proving the above situation. In the above sample 97% of the aged people are married and 41% are widows. Out of the above 41%, 73.2% are females and 26.8% are males. The number of widowed females exceeds the number of widowers which about 3 times more. According to national census of 1981 the widowed rate of females and males was 42% and 11% respectively. Thus, the widowed rate of both females and males of the sample remains at a higher level than that of the national level. Female widowed rate taking a higher proportion has to be considered. When a male is getting married with a female of a much lesser age may cause the death of the husband much before the wife. The other reason is that the life expectancy of females is much more than the males. The third factor is that most of the widowers get married for the second time that the widowed females (De Silva; 1994, perera, 1989; siddhisena & Ratnayake, 1998; Coldwell & Others, 1988)

According to the above facts, females become widowed more than males. Due to the increasing rate of life expectancy of females, it becomes clear that in the coming years, females over 75 years will increase and the rate of widowed females will also increase in the future. Widowed percentage of elderly people of the study area is 42% and 74% out of them are females.

Becoming widowed is a condition that effects a vast change in the lives of females. But, it could be seen that elderly females who are with a satisfactory income level are making themselves prepared for such situations. Widowed females in rural areas spend helpless lives than widowed elderly females living in urban areas. Even the poor elderly female widows living in urban areas also spend difficult lives. The reason is that their financial situation is very weak. They have no fixed level of income for their living the other reason is that females are usually confined to households without any employment and as such they become helpless unless their husbands were eligible for pension payments or any other gratuities. Usually, females in urban areas engage in employment during their young ages more than females in rural areas. Therefore they are able to build up some sort of income or a stability in their financial status. Further, most of the husbands in urban areas are eligible for pension payments after retirement during their old age. Thus, in the near future there is a tendency of cropping up of several problems related to surveillance of widowers rather than that of the widowers of the rural areas.

Health Condition of Aged People

There is very close relationship between ageing and the conditions of health. It is because when people get older their health conditions also tend to decline. Table no 4 illustrates the health condition of the elders in the study area.

Table 4: Health Status of Elderly Persons

Health status Age (years)	Very good			General			Weak (frequently ill)			Bed ridden		
	R	U	Total	R	U	Total	R	U	Total	R	U	Total
60-64	-	4	4	8	11	19	2	7	9	-	-	-
65-69	1	3	4	16	11	27	6	8	14	3	2	5
70-74	-	2	2	10	10	20	15	13	28	3	2	5
75 & above	-	1	1	9	11	20	21	12	33	6	3	9
Total	1	10	11	43	43	86	44	40	84	12	7	19

48% of the elders in the study area are of good or normal health conditions but 52% of the elder are will ailing and constantly sickly conditions. 9.5% of the population in study area has to be depending on somebody as they are in infirm conditions. Out of them 63.2% are in the rural area and 74% of the infirm patients are over 70 years of age. Accordingly it is clear that the health condition of people declines as they grow older. Feeble and constantly ailing elders are 73% in the study areas who are over 70 years of age. But there are elders over 70 years of age at the rate of 44.3% in the study area who are with very good or normal health conditions as such, it is a clear that even “old-old” people are also in good health conditions. The balance 55.7% who are in healthy conditions belongs to the age group of 60-69 years. The specialty in this situation is except for one person who is very healthy, all others were from the urban area. The reason for this may be that people who are living in urban area are well educated and even for a simple ailment, they use to take immediate treatment as they are highly concerned with their health. They have the capability of spending for their ailments which cannot be afforded by the elders in the rural areas and other aspect is they are not very much concerned about their health like in urban areas. They neglect their illnesses without taking treatment. Due to this reason, the tendency of they being falling ill and declining in their health conditions is at a higher rate as 55% in the rural area where as the same in urban area is 45% . Further, elders in rural areas are unable to afford for nutritional food as they are poor.

Mostly noticed diseases in the area suffered by the elders are heart ailments, high blood pressure, rheumatic ailments and diabetes. About 53% of the elders where suffering from these diseases. 4% in the sample were suffering from paralysis out of which 3/4 is from the rural area. Patients with heart ailments and high blood pressure are more in the urban area than in the

rural area and from the percentage of 25.5% who are suffering from these ailments, 60.8% are from the urban area. Reason for this situation is that rural population attends to agricultural activities and other hard work but people living in urban areas do not work hard because they work as government servants or work in companies. According to the present social economic transformation, this situation will further develop.

It was revealed at the survey that elders living in rural areas do not get proper treatment for their illnesses. Some do not have money to get treatment for their illnesses. 59% of the rural elders and 15% of urban elders are unable to find enough funds to take treatment for their diseases. In the meantime there were 26% elders in the rural area and 83% elders in the urban area who said that they do not have any difficulty in spending money for their illnesses. Accordingly, it is clear that elders living in rural areas are facing numerous problems in preventing diseases than elders of the urban area.

Employment Status of Elderly People

At present as the life expectancy of people is increasing they can live longer and they have to possess an adequate economic security to spend a pleasurable life in the end. As such, it will be useful to find out their source of income or the employment status. Table 5 illustrates the employment status of the aged population of the study areas.

Table 5: Distribution of Elders as per Gender, Residence and Job Status

Job status	Rural			Urban		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Still working on full time basis	-	2	2	-	13	13
Working on part time basis	2	27	29	2	1	3
Retired from permanent employment	1	17	18	6	49	55
Working on part time basis after retirement	-	2	2	1	2	3
Unemployed	42	7	7	24	2	26
Total	45	55	100	33	67	100

According to table 5, the highest percentage of 36.5% has been held by the elders who had retired from permanent job. This category includes not only the pensioners of the government sector but also that of the private and agricultural sector (farmers). Only 24.7% of the entire percentage of pensioners are there in the rural sector. 75.3% are there in the urban sector possessing a value of 3/4 of the entire percentage of pensioners. 89% of them had been in government service. But in the rural sector only 22% of the pensioners had been in government service. Another distinguished feature is that among the pensioners from the rural areas and urban areas 94.4% and 89% respectively were males. 7.5% are still in continuous employment.

3/4 of them are from the urban sector. 16% of the aged people are engaged in part time employment. 38% of the elders had never been employed and still they are unemployed. Out of them 89% are females being house wives.

This employment status was investigated into according to the age levels of the elders. It was revealed at the study that 27% of the elders are engaged in some type of employment and 83% of them are between the age group of 60-69 years. 17% of the elders who are employed are over 70 years of age and this fact itself proves that it is not so possible to work when the declines. Elders over 60 years of age are engaged in some type of employment an out of them 61% are from the rural sector. The reason for this situation is that elders of the rural sector are trying to engage themselves in any possible employment until they become feeble.

Sources of Income of Elders

Five sources of income of elders could be identified at the survey among other livelihoods.

Table 6: Distribution of Elders as per Sources of Income

Source of income	Rural	Urban
From employment	10	12
From pension	4	49
From charity allowance	34	3
From property of land / business / bank accounts	5	8
From children	40	12
Other	7	16
Total	100	100

When considered separately, 49% from the urban sector and 4% from the rural sector are drawing pensions. Therefore, it makes clear that the main source of income of the elders in the urban sector is the pension payments. But the main source of income of the elders of the rural sector is from their children and secondly through government charity allowances. 3% of the elders from the urban sector and 34% of the elders in the rural sector are drawing government charity allowances. All these elders who drawing the government charity allowances have to depend on their children. It is because they cannot manage their expenses solely from the allowance they get from the government. Although, some elders manage with a single source of income, it was revealed at the survey that some elders have two or three income sources. In the urban sector such elders are 17% where as in the rural sector they are at the rate of 3% only. Accordingly, elders of the rural sector are suffering with limitation of income and without a permanent source of income relatively that of the urban sector which has become a serious impact on them.

In the urban sector there are so many ways of gaining income levels. It is not possible to live in the competitive society without earning from various ways in the present. Although the children are also earning from substantive employments and are spending good living standards, these elderly parents in the urban sector do not want to depend on their children. As there is adequate income for about 85% of the elders in the urban sector they think that they can manage their expenses but they like to stay with the children enjoying their love and care. There can be a lot of parents who do not get the affection of their children. Such parents spend the time with great distress.

Rural sector has a different ways of income structures than in the urban sector. Means of income are lesser in number and as such there is no competition in the rural sector. A very close bond is there between parents and children. Field survey revealed that these families something with great difficulty and spend the day with parents and children together. Certain aged females are earning by way of weaving mats, supplying food items to tea kiosks and houses while aged males over 75 years of age earn their daily needs by chopping firewood, cleaning of gardens, servants, watchers and doing many other odd jobs. When considering this situation, it is clear that more than 65% of the elders living in rural sector have to depend on their children. As children also do not possess a good educational level, they are unable to obtain a job in well-established organization, and as such they work as labourers or in daily paid employments. Therefore, they are unable to look after their parents properly. However, even with difficulties, in the rural sector, children are looking after their aged parents with great care and love but the situation in the urban sector is quite different. 50.5% of the elders in the sample depend on their own income while 81% of them are from the urban sector.

Level of Income of the Elderly

Table No.7 Distribution of Elders as per Monthly Income

Income (Rs.)	Rural	Urban
No income	33	11
Below 300	34	3
300 – 499	6	-
500 – 999	5	-
1000 – 1999	9	3
2000 – 2999	3	23
3000 & above	10	60
Total	100	100

Income of elders is lesser in the rural sector than in the urban sector. 22% of the sample is without any income out of whom 75% are from the rural sector. 34% of aged population in the rural sector is earning below Rs. 300 and 33% are earning more than Rs. 300. However, 60% of the elders in the urban sector earn over Rs. 3000, but only 10% of the rural sector is enjoying such a facility. Accordingly, most of the rural sector elders are drawing lesser than Rs. 1000 as such, it could be mentioned that urban sector elders are sustaining a greater contribution towards their families. In the urban sector there are certain reasons for them to reach such income levels.

Educational level of a person creates a special effect in employment and income levels. Educational level in urban areas is higher. Employment facilities are also available in ample. Getting a suitable job according to the educational level is not difficult in the urban sector. Further, they have the possibility of earning from other means apart from their permanent employment. Accordingly, as there is ample opportunities of getting a suitable job according to the educational level, in the urban sector the percentage of pensioners are higher and as there are so many ways of earning, the income level of the urban sector remains at a higher level. Apart from the above, not only husband but also the wife is engaged in employment in the urban sector. The reason is that their educational level is also higher. When the educational level of females is higher, the number of opportunities for employment is also higher. Further, females in the urban sector are being encouraged to engage themselves in employment. Females in the urban sector are also forced to get employed due to the difficulties arising from the escalating cost of living in the island. This situation also makes room for the elderly people in the urban sector to draw pension payments. Owing to this reason, the state will have to bear a large amount of money by way of payment of pensions in the future. Due to the increase of life expectancy, the government will have to pay their pensions for a longer period.

However, there will be many serious impacts on the economy due to the payment of pensions. First is the existing expenditure. When existing expenditure increases, the government savings decrease. Pension payments are also accounted under the category of existing expenditure. Because of this, the entire state savings decline resulting the decrease of investments and the economic development rate.

There are several factors that will lead to the decrease of the income level of the rural sector. They are unable to get employed in formally organized institutions due to their lack of proper educational levels. Therefore, they cannot keep any hopes of drawing a pension or any other source of income. 34% of the elders draw the government charity allowance as their sole income. It is an amount lessor than Rs.300. Apart from the above, they occasionally engage themselves in sweated labour to earn a living. They have to face innumerable difficulties due to

lack of permanent source of income to meet their day to day expenses. On the one hand, there are no employment facilities in rural sector as in the urban sector. Income resources are also limited. Other reason in rural areas, only the householder is attending to any employment. The educational level of females remain at a lower level than of the males. They are unable to engage themselves in employment due to their lower educational level and according to traditional customs females are being confined to heavy house hold activities, as such they have no time to do any employment. Most of them are not favorable in doing any job. These reasons lead to the status of their income being at a lower level. In addition to all the above, increasing cost of living is another threat to their day to day lives.

Savings of Elderly People

People can face future difficulties by saving a possible portion of their earnings. It is a relief not only for him but also for the entire family and society. Development of personal savings leads to the encouragement of investments and it causes a development on the entire economy of the country. It is revealed through data that savings of aged population is considered, their savings are at a lower level and only 41% of the elders in the sample are exercising savings.

Table 8: Distribution of Elders as per Monthly Savings

Savings (Rs.)	Rural	Urban
No savings	87	31
Below 500	6	23
500 – 999	6	10
1000 – 1999	-	88
2000 – 2999	1	5
3000 – 3999	-	2
4000 & above	-	21
Total	100	100

According to table no. 08, an adequate savings could be seen from the urban sector. 59% of the entire sample does not save any amount. Non saving category of 73.7% is from the rural sector. Only 13% of the sample does engage in savings. Out of them 12% are saving less than Rs. 1000. Only one person has saved more than 1000. But in the urban sector 36% of the sample have deposited in savings out of the balance. 33% have deposited less than Rs. 1000, while 31% have not deposited anything. As a whole, adequate savings could be seen only in the urban sector while the savings from the rural sector remains at a lower level.

The reason for having adequate savings in the urban sector and lowing lesser savings in the rural sector is the discrepancy of the level of education as mentioned earlier. Elders in the

rural sector were not able to save because their educational level was low and were unable to find any permanent jobs. Elders in the urban sector were able to get pension payments as they were educated and were engaged in permanent employments. Therefore, they were able to save a considerable amount from their pension payments. In some households, both husband and wife are employed and they can save one person's pension payment, according to their statements. Especially, elders who are drawing over Rs. 3000 only are compelled to deposit for savings. 19% of the elders in the urban sector have deposited more than Rs. 4000. There is 9% of the elders in the urban sector who have not saved anything even though they are drawing very high pension payments. 59% of the sample are not having any savings and 14.5% of the elders have deposited less than 500. This fact proves that the savings remain at a very weak situation and to deposit an adequate savings, the elder should have an income of at least more than Rs. 3000.

CONCLUSION

According to the facts revealed from the survey, mostly the reasons such as economic difficulties, health problems, being neglected by children, not aware of problems in the old age have led to the condition of elderly people being helpless, poverty and lack of adequate economic security has caused the decline of their quality of life. 83% of the elders who are without any income or earning less than Rs. 300 represents the rural sector and they are forced to depend on their children.

It was revealed that elders of rural sector faced more problems than the elders in the urban sector. Their problems intensifies further through lower income levels, limitations in earning capacities, unsatisfactory sanitary facilities, inadequate health facilities and other social reasons. Children living in the urban sector consider their parents as a problem due to their weak economic situations and lack of relaxation. Most of the elders prefer to live in elders' homes because they lack the attention of their children. Elders in rural sector enter elders' homes due to their economic problems while elders in the urban areas prefer elders' homes to relieve themselves from isolation and loneliness. Findings of the study revealed that the educational level of elders has caused a serious impact towards their income, savings and investments.

89% of the elders in the urban sector who are pensioners have retired from government service while it is 22% in the rural sector. Owing to this reason, the government will have to spend a vast amount of monthly in the future for the payment for pensions, with the increase of life expectancy of the people. Accordingly, government savings will decrease due to the

increase of existing expenditure. It will result in the decrease of the entire savings of the country and the investments too which will affect the economic development of the country.

Majority of the elders especially of the lower class are facing economic problems. Most of them have not been employed in formal employment sectors which are eligible for pensions, provident funds, employee's trust fund and other benefits. Most of them do not possess any savings or any insurance cover. A smaller percentage of lower class elders receive social security benefits, but they are not sufficient even for their daily needs of food. On the other hand, even the pensioners find it difficult to manage with the increasing cost of living. Economic problems of elders will intensify further with the passage of time.

It was revealed at the survey that elders living in rural areas do not get proper treatment for their illnesses. Some do not have money to get treatment for their illnesses. Females become widowed more than males. Due to the increasing rate of life expectancy of females, it becomes clear that in the coming years, females over 75 years will increase and the rate of widowed females will also increase in the future.

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