# ADJUSTMENT MECHANISMS IN THE RETIREMENT: FROM SRI LANKAN EXPERIENCE.

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**Abstract** - In this research, our attention is mainly focused towards the close examination in the adjustment mechanisms of life style and the behavior of employees, who retired from the state sector. In order to adjust to the changes with their lives after retirement, employees tend to use many different strategies and mechanisms to sustain a stable life.Research problem devoted to identifying the various adaptive mechanisms of retires in their behavioral patterns and practices of everyday life. Ninety four respondents were examined under mix methods and result clearly show that influence of religious practices and ideologies are dominated on the adjustment process, further family bonds and maintaining social status arehighly influential factors of retires life in Sri Lanka.

**Key Words -** Adjustment, Behavior, Change, Retirement

## I. INTRODUCTION

The retirement period in one's life is considered to be a critical period, with employees having confronted with many social and psychological disturbances both before and after their retirement. The early gerontological studies viewed retirement as a 'Crisis' event problematic to the wellbeing of the individual. Some researchers have seen retirement as dysfunctional, stressful life event with negative outcomes.(Barron,Strien &Henkens,1982.cited in Solinge & Henkens,2008)Given that as many as one third of retirees have some difficulty adjusting to retirement.( Atchley,1976 in Wong & Earl, 2008)But in the recent research involvements has tried to inquire the positive aspects of retirement transition.(Stansefeld & Marmol,2003)Retirement experienced by the older may vary according to their financial, physical, social or psychological situation. Therefore the retirement experience is a subjective event encountered by the individual as their own life style.

In this study we try to explore adjustment mechanisms encountered in the retirement process as experience by the Sri Lankan adults. Adjusting to the new situations in one's life course is not a strange thing and the concept of role transition is used to explain the process of changes in the life span. Diverse array of role transitions generally occurred in the life course of a person. "Role transition is an important type of change because it strongly influences the behavior and social identity of those who participate in the process."(Allen & Vliert, 1984) Retirement form work always existing as one significant role transitional stage of a person. Van Solinge and Henkens have argued that the relation between satisfaction and adjustment may be more complex, for example it is possible to adjust to new situations (e.g. Chronic illness) without enjoying it, and fact that an outcome is positive does not necessarily imply that adjustment was easy, a positive outcome may be the end of a painful process.(Henkens, springer and Tazelaar,1996 cited in solinge&Henkens, 2008) In the recent research works on the adjustment mechanisms in the retirement process has tend to inquire deferent aspects of the phenomena. Wong and Earl (2008) in their study on making an integrated model for retirement adjustment has targeted individual, Psychological and organizational levels. In the above research Wong and Earl have focused health, income, marital status, age, gender and number of years since retirement under the individual influences correlates with retirement adjustment. Further they raised the question psychological characteristics such as attitude towards the work; self-concept and personal identity is influential on retirement adjustment in most studies primarily focused on few domains of resources. To our knowledge, only one previous study on retirement adjustment has included all six resource domains suggested by Wang and colleagues (2011). In this study, Leung and Earl (2012) evaluated a resource inventory and found the six resource types to be aggregated in three clusters with a shared variance between material (i.e., physical and financial) and psychological (i.e., cognitive, emotional, and motivational) resources. Social resources were the only domain without shared variance with other resource types. Although Leung and Earl found all three resource domains to be related to both adjustment and satisfaction in retirement, studies on the role of these six resources for changes in well-being in the transition from work to retirement are still lacking ( Hansson ,Buratt et al.,2017)
In this study we examines only selected behavioral patterns and their changes soon after the retirement and views the set of changes occurred as adjusting to the new status of life. However we try to cover major three resource domains via investigating the changes of behavioral patterns after the retirement. As a limitation herewith we ignored the pre-retirement

period and the changes and adjustments enrolled. We onlyaim to investigate the experience of retirees of government sector in Sri Lanka with respect to their post retirement experience.

## DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RETIREES OF SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka has identified as a leading Asian country in the growth of elder population and it has been estimated 22% of the population will be above 60 in 2030.One out of every five in total population will be above sixty (Gamage, 2015) The number of retirees in anincreasing stance by every year . The percentage of total retires in the country has reported 27% increase during the decade of 2000 to 2010.In 2000 it was reported as 371772 and has increased up to 473762 in the end of year 2010 (Thilakarathne, 2012) According to the recent statistics it has reported total number of retires in Sri Lanka as 575954 in the end of year 2016.(Department of Pension: statistics, 2016) Out of different employment sectors "State sector" represents a vast significant portion of employees in Sri Lanka (44%) According to the recent census reports total number of 1,117,808 persons engage in the public and semi government sector employments in Sri Lanka.( Preliminary report,2016) According to Thilakarathne one out of every 40 in the total population is a retiree. (Thilakarathne,2012)

**Estimated Expenses for pension payments in Sri Lanka (2015-2025)**

| Year | Total Number of Retirees | Estimated cost (Billions Rs) |
|---|---|---|
| 2015 | 510000 | 125 |
| 2020 | 530000 | 160 |
| 2025 | 570000 | 200 |

**(Thilakarathene,2000)**

According to the above enumerations and predictions wage of pensioners shows gradual increase.

Other than some exceptional situations, generally age 55 and 60 is been considered as the retirement age in Sri Lanka. This age limit was calculated in 1949 and legislated nearly sixty years ago when a period such as life expectancy was estimated as 57 years. As Amarabandu pointed out it has not been changed the retirement age in Sri Lanka according to the increase of life expectancy as 69 per male and 74 per female ((Amarabandu,2004)

Though out these figures and numbers it is clear that retired population will be a decisive factor in economic and social wellbeing in the whole social system. As according to the changes occurred in the aging population in Sri Lanka there is no such research involvement in order to reveal the matters. Therefore our interest tends to search changing life styles and the behavioral patterns of the retirees with special attention on adjustment mechanism.

### Research Problem

Research problem devoted toidentifying the various adaptive mechanisms of retires in their behavioral patterns and practices of everyday life. Time consumption, leisure activities, religious activities, usage of medicine, food habits, and technological device usage were the core areas which examined. Moreover, it was further examined how the above mentioned life styles and behavioral characteristics influenced on relationships with individual's social institutions, such as one's family, religion and Politics.

## III. METHODOLOGY

Simple random sample was adapted to collect data under a sample frame of retired officers from government departments. This sample consisted of 94 respondents, with both males and females. Sample represents Colombo (N=64) and Gampaha district (N=30) in the Western province Sri Lanka, which are the highest numbers of retired persons reported. Furthermore, mix method was adapted in the case of data collecting, together with unstructured interviewing. Measuring the changes not only limited to oneparticular domain and broadly assume the physical, economical, psychological and social backgrounds of the life.

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

### Work engagement after retirement

Retirement may not necessarily be viewed as a permanent career exit (Wang & Shultz, 2010; Zhan & Wang, 2015); many retirees continue working to some extent in the form of bridge employments as an intermediate step toward a complete labor force withdrawal (Shultz, 2003) However form the sample we inquired only 47% engaged in working and female retires are more tend to exist from the career opotunities.90% of the retires who occupy after the retirement says they contribute to their family wellbeing by their earnings.

### Adjustments in the Family

There are many structural differences in the families that the way of living with the retired. From retires 13% lived only with their married partner. Half of the retired lives in the extended family structure. Most of the reties (72%) who live with their grandchildren has adapted to be asbaby sitters and they stated that it makes them happier.

### Maintaining prier friendships after the retirement

These social connections and friendships can provide arich source of relationships that nurtures and supports people in stressful times. (Osborne, 2012) Although maintaining the old friendships(friends from the former work place) after the retirement seems weekend among retires. 46% of the sample

says maintaining their friendships are in a decreasing level. From the total sample 23% has mentioned that they have no any connection with their co-workers in the previous workplace.

**Interactions with relatives and neighborhood**

Social interaction with close relatives and neighbors has shown to be increased along with the time spent with them, in a remarkable manner. More than half of the sample(53%) stated that interactions with relatives increased. when revealed the adjustment mechanisms of retires neighborhood relationships seems to be an important segment; that has not been inquired lot. In this research 70% of the sample stated that their connections with neighbors in an increasing position.

**Engagement with social events and Gatherings**

Retirement in one's life pace necessarily make a role shift. Sometimes it may lead to make a status inconsistence with loss of early role .As a proactive adjustment to role shift, significant number of retires have tried to make new responsibilities with positions in communityorganizations. In our sample 70 percent of respondents say that they have taken the membership of such organizations after the retirement. Further their participation in the social events and functions also been increased soon after getting retired. Respectively 93% and 97% of retires says they do participate in wedding functions and funeral functions.

**Involvement of religious activities**

Our field evidence clearly shows that religious activities of retires has been increased in their every day practices. Go to the temple, observe sill, pilgrimage and participate in donation programs are within those activities. Pilgrimage to local temples and scared places shows a significant increaseamong retires. This may be a substitute activity for leisure and entertainment in the Sri Lankan cultural setting empowered by the Buddhist ideologies.

**Changes in leisure activities and time consumption**

Approximately 63% of the sample says period of time expended with leisure activities has been increased. Engagement of the leisure activities supports old adults to continue their active life style. But it should be mentioned in this paper we did not measure the changes of leisure activities according to the deferent age categories ofretires. The comparison between the differenttypes of activities studied here shows that it is necessary to differentiatefurther between fields of leisure activity. (Scherger,Nazroo &Higgs,2010) Over two third of the sample says watching TV is the most favorable leisure activity during the time.Among themost interested programs are religious programs (54%) News(39%) and significant number of retires says that they would like to watch the cricket matches.

The data obtain from the field work evidently show the significant rapid change in their routine activities. Time consumption has oriented through a new behavioral changes. Changes have been identified in the wake up times as well as sleeping habits. 46% says they go to sleep later than before they retired.

**Usage of medical drugs and Health issues**

Health and Physical fitness is a vital issue that effective on the wellbeing of the reties. High tendency of getting non transmitted deceases observed in the study. According to the field survey following levels of deceases been identified.

Level of illness and deceases suffered by retires

| Decease | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|
| High Blood Pressure | 67% |
| Diabetics | 43% |
| Cholesterol | 20% |
| Cirrhosis | 5% |
| Respiratory | 10% |
| Cardiovascular | 5% |

Field survey data, 2016

Addiction to some medical drugs had also been observed among these individuals. 5% of retires in the sample says they use some drugs without medical instructions. But most of retires practice regular participation in the medical clinics, 57% in the government clinics as well as 29% in the private clinics.

Lack of engagement in exercise is common among the retired and only 23% tend to daily exercise.Other 34% of respondents mentioned that they occupy with every day activities and agricultural works for maintain their physical fitness. Another 9% says they have disabilities of doing exercise due to illness.

**Changes of the food habits**

Important changes in their food habits has been observed, having over 21% of males and 43% of female become vegetarians after their retirement. Nearly seven percent of the females has reduced quantity oftheir meal, and increased nutritional condition of the meal. It has reported that having meals according to a timely manner disrupted among both males and females after their retirement.

**Changes in the drug and Alcohol usage**

From the male respondents 33% says that their alcohol usage increased during the retirement period. More than half of the mail retires used to take alcohol usually and nearly 50% those who take alcohol had addicted to smoking. Chewing beetle is also identified as a common practice among retires and it shows a gradual increase.

**Usage of new technological devices**

There is no any positive correlation identified regarding usage of technological devices after

retirement. Only 40% of the old adults use mobile phones within the sample.Out of them 25% became mobile phone users after the retirement. Less than 2% says they use internet and connected to social media.

**Attitude towards the death**

Most of the reties (64%) views that death as a common phenomenon that have to be expected and inevitable. Nearly 13% says they have rights and responsibilities to be fulfilled before their death.Majority of the sample expressed their willingness of having a sudden death. This view accompanied with the expectation of having a death without any pains or sufferings. Further, religious thoughts can be identified as strong element in the pre preparation role in the dying among the Sri Lankan reties.

**Main Findings**

Among the adjustment mechanism of the Sri Lankan retires, influence of religious practices and ideologies are identified as the major element, that change the leisure activities, food habits, attitude towards the death ect. This has governed by the Buddhist teachings of the way of life.

Strong tendency of maintaining social status as a fact of personality adjustment is visible in the role changes of retires along with seeking the positions in the social organizations, voluntary groups and unions. High propensity observed in involvement of family related issues and relationships other than the friendship interactions and outer social activities.

In the case of health and wellbeing it has been identified that Sri Lankan reties have less attention on good health practices as well as physical exercises andmore dependency on the medical drugs.

Negative correlation among retires and usage of new communicational has been find out.

Addiction rate of alcohol and drug is higher in Sri Lanka among the male retires.

Higher percentage of retires tend to engaged in work related economic activities after the retirement.

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