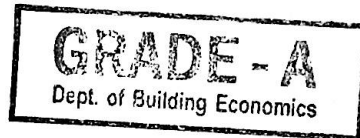
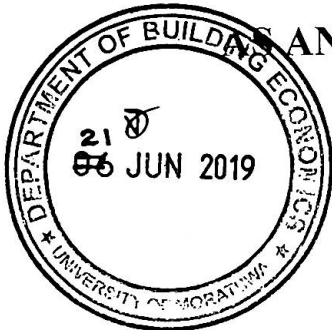


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# PERCEPTION TOWARDS ENGAGING AGED EMPLOYEES IN PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS AS AN ALTERNATIVE WORKFORCE



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(179011V)

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Department of Building Economics

University of Moratuwa

University of Moratuwa



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Name : K.G.S.D.Gunarathne  
Signature : *UOM Verified Signature*  
Date : 2019.06.21

This is to certify that Ms. K.G.S.D. Gunarathne has done this research dissertation titled "Investigation of attitude towards engaging aged employees in public sector organizations" under my supervision.

Name : Dr. K.G.A.S. Waidyasekara  
Signature : *UOM Verified Signature*  
Date : 21 | 06 | 2019

Department of Building Economics  
Faculty of Architecture  
University of Moratuwa  
Sri Lanka

## ABSTRACT

Extending the working life is an objective of almost every policymaker's agenda to confront the skilled labour shortage in a country. Majority of states have benefitted by altering the mandatory retirement age of employees, considering the increase in life expectancy and privileged health condition of the aged population than in the past. Therefore, it is worth to implement this strategy in Sri Lanka as a solution for the shortage of skilled labour market in many sectors. However, to initiate this strategy in Sri Lanka, there is a requirement of engagement in many organizational parties. As a result, the ability to engage aged employees to the public sector was investigated in this study.

The current employment status of aged employees in the public sector was identified from the preliminary investigation of this study. Data were collected through interviews from 81 public sector organizations and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Positive, negative, and strategic insights to public sector due to engaging aged employees were investigated according to Managers' perception during phase 1 of the detailed investigation of this study. Perceptions of aged employees on retiring or retain on work were also identified in phase 2 of the detailed investigation. Quantitative and qualitative data collected from interviews and questionnaires of the in-depth study were analyzed using both descriptive statistics and thematic analysis, respectively. The scope of the study was limited to public sector organizations, and Hambanthota district was selected as a case.

Results of this study revealed that managerial-level employees in the public sector have less awareness regarding the issue of population aging. Besides, they stress the need for appropriate job designs and training programs to enhance the employability of aged employees. However, the overall results of this study disclosed that engaging aged employees is beneficial for public sector organizations, and aged employees can be considered as an acceptable alternative for skill shortage in the labour market.

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## **DEDICATION**

*This study is wholeheartedly dedicated to my beloved parents, who have been my source of inspiration and gave me strength when I thought of giving up, who continually provide their moral, spiritual, emotional, support.*

&

*All retired employees in public sector, who work hard with ample dedication and willing to work more.....*

## **DECLARATION**

I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application published or written by another person or material which is to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a University or other institution of higher education, except where due acknowledgment and reference is made in the text.

Name : K.G.S.D.Gunarathne

Signature :

Date : 2019.06.21

This is to certify that Ms. K.G.S.D. Gunarathne has done this research dissertation titled “Investigation of attitude towards engaging aged employees in public sector organizations” under my supervision.

Name : Dr. K.G.A.S. Waidyasekara

Signature :

Date :

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## CHAPTER 1

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

A population can be distinctively categorized into three groups as child population, working population, and aged population; the child and aged populations are collaboratively regarded as dependent populations (Manike, 2016). The population of the working age is considered as an asset for any country, while the other two categories of populations have similar importance since child dependents are a category with treasured potential to be integrated into the future workforce of the country, and the aged worked well in their prime years of life to upkeep the country's economy (Rajan, 2016).

Statistical evidence reveals a tendency of increasing the aged population globally (World Bank, 2007). According to UN population report (2002), the percentage of elderly, those aged over 60 years in the total population, is expected to be more than twice from 10%, which is the current value, to 20% during the next 50 years. This report presumes from the projected data that by 2050, the aged population tends to exceed the number of children aged up to 14 (inclusive). Kuroda (1993) stated that the implication of population aging is likely to be massive in 21st century, and hence, defined it as "The Era of Population Aging." However, population aging is a process no longer narrowed to industrialized countries, as it has become one of the leading demographic challenges in most developing countries, especially in the Asian region (Milan, 2008).

As depicted in the literature, the definition of aging is subjective. However, the most commonly-used cut-off point is 65 years. This was the eligibility age to have benefits from the world's first public social security legislation in Germany in 1873, and that age further preserved in the retirement regulations of other countries as well (Davies, 2003). However, in most of the developing world, 60 years and above is considered as the cut-off for aging (Myers, 1990). In Sri Lanka, age 60 and above is considered the borderline in identifying the elderly population (Siddhisena, 2004).

The demographic structure of any country is related to many factors, such as changes in life expectancy, fertility rates, and net migration levels (Arrowsmith & McGoldrick, 1996). Notably, in recent years, there has been a progressive increase in life expectancy

and the reduction in fertility levels at the global level (European Commission, 2005). Falling the demand for children in the world is typically due to growths of awareness regarding birth controls, raising of education of women, and rising opportunity costs of childbearing related to the participation of women in the workforce (Chiu, Snape, & Redman, 2001). Despite the trend reduction in fertility rates, different countries and regions continue to exhibit significant variations in fertility levels. For instance, the fertility rate of Africa is about 5.4 children per women, and it is about three times of it in Europe (Van Dalen et al., 2009). According to the World Economic Forum (2011), there is a progressive increase migration both within and between countries during the past few decades due to the relaxation of migration policies. In many Middle-East countries, migration is encouraged to fill specific skills shortages, with implications for economies.

Aging of the population causes many economic implications such as the payments of pension for lengthened retirement period, changes in the structure of labor market, and many changes in consumption, production, transport, and expenditure on health (Siddhisena, 2005). Perera (2004) emphasized that the disengagement of aged people from work cause a loss to economic activities. Further, the aged people require more health concern and treatment than younger people, and the pattern and causes of their illness considerably vary. This necessitates extraordinary care and the cost for health increases with aging. Ultimately, the establishment of long-term health care is a critical concern combined with the aging population (Perera, 2004).

Aging of the population also leads to many social problems. In Asian social traditions, the elders are treated in a respectful manner (Bell & Rutherford, 2013). The United Nations observes that due to industrialization, urbanization, and adoption to new technology have brought radical social changes to this thinking, and it tends to weaken the family support system for older people in Asian societies. Navaratne (2018) highlighted main economic impacts of an aging population as an increase in the dependency ratio, shortage of workers, increased government spending on healthcare and pensions, and ultimately, the tendency to reduce the overall GDP in the country.

Heister and Bandow (2018) identified that the world would suffer from shortages of skilled workers over the next few decades. Even more, talent gaps are a common consequence and pose a hurdle to sustainable economic growth for many countries in

the world (World Economic Forum, 2011). To address these emerging labor shortages, organizations must seek alternative sources of skilled labour. Experience and knowledge of aged employees can be utilized to fill the gap in the labour market. Heister and Bandow (2018) stressed the urgent need to alter current circumstances in labour policies, as approximately 31 million skilled trade positions will be left vacant by 2020 due to Baby Boomer retirement estimates.

Extreme rates of unemployment among the aged population appeals policy concern in many industrial democracies (Heywood, 2008). The United Kingdom demands a change in “employer attitudes” toward older workers (Rickard, 1999), while the government also launched new policies to provide incentives to hire aged workers (McQuaid, 2004). The policymakers in Australia have created particular employment protocols for recruiting aged workers (Encel, 2000), while the administrators in Hong Kong are much concerned about age discrimination (Ho, 2000), and the economists in the United States debate about the consequences of outdated age-discrimination laws in the country (Adams, 2004).

However, different people have diverse attitudes toward the effectiveness of employing aged employees to organizations. According to Koller and Gruber (2001), managers of organizations have recognized older workers have more technical and firm-specific knowledge, and they stated that it is more beneficial for a company to increase the tenure of workers within the company. Hutchens (1988) argues the attitude of aged employees towards training can reduce the job opportunities for older workers, and employment that requires substantial training are more likely for younger workers. However, the aged population have very few re-employment prospects and have a long time for re-employment (Chan and Stevens; 1999).

## **1.2 Problem statement**

According to Perera (2007), Sri Lanka is one of the fastest aging societies within the South Asian region. In 1947, there were 0.36 million Sri Lankans above the age of 60-years, which is 5.4 percent of the total population (Senanayaka.2012). In 2001, 10% of the total population, which is about 1.09 million people, were over 60 years (Silva, 2007). According to the United Nations (2018), the current population of Sri Lanka is about twenty million and almost 10 percent of its population is above the age of 65.

The population growth rate above 60 years is more than the population growth rate of Sri Lanka. This makes an increase in the dependency ratio (Silva, 2007). In 2001, 55 dependencies were there for every 100 working age persons, and it increased up to 56 in 2016. Further, in 2016, as compared to the year 2000, the dependency rate of children declined from 58 percent to 39 percent, and the old age dependency ratio increased from 7 percent to 16 percent (Bandara, 2017).

The aged population of Sri Lanka has a critical problem of inadequacy of earnings for their later life. As stated by Gaminiratne (2004), a vast majority of people in the latter part of their lives in Sri Lanka do not have a proper income to fulfill even their basic needs. However, the author stated that many developed countries pay increasing attention to old age security schemes such as public assistance programs and life insurance schemes for the aged people.

Another issue related to the inadequacy of the income gained from social security schemes is to spend on health and live in their later life. It is not convenient to cope with retirement benefits and increasing inflation, as the government does not usually consider adjusting these pensions' benefits with the changing cost of living or inflation (Shantha, 2003). However, although the amount paid as pension for one person is low, the total expenditures on pension schemes, which the government has to bear, is considerably high, and it exhibits an increasing trend according to the projected data (Gaminiratne, 2004). The number of pensioners retiring from the government sector has increased annually by 3.0 percent from 1992 to 2002, while the expenditure has risen annually by 14 percent (Shantha, 2003).

Within this context, it is worthy of paying attention to the people aged 60 and over, often referred to as the 'aged population,' to identify the effectiveness of participation in economic activities, as they comprise an increasingly important role in the economy of the country. Altering human resource policy to retain aged workers within the labour force after their mandatory retirement age can be suggested as an effective method that can halt the skills shortage in the labour market. Further, this will tend to release individual households from the excess burden of aged dependents (Boskin, 1977; The World Bank, 2008). This is a critical area that demands the attention of policymakers in Sri Lanka, as the labour force participation rate of aged people in Sri Lanka is



considerably less compared with other countries in the region such as China, India, Thailand, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. (Vodopivec, 2008).

However, the available literature dealing with the issue of population aging in Sri Lanka has mostly focused on the statistical data, which confirm the trend of increasing aged population. Subsequently, it is imperative to focus on social and economic impacts of the population aging and methodologies to empower them, and not considering them as a dependent group or a burden to the economy. This study presents a baseline to prepare practical strategies to alter the existing policies to promote active engagement of aged people for the economy of Sri Lanka.

### **1.3 Aims & objectives**

This study aims to investigate the ability of engaging aged employees in public sector organizations. This tends to promote the “age aware” culture in organizations than “age free” practices, as aged employees are a more significant segment in the labour force. Therefore, the following objectives were set:

#### **Objectives**

- Identify the current employment status of aged employees in public sector organizations.
- Evaluate managerial perception in terms of positive, negative, and strategic insights on engaging aged employees in public sector organizations.
- Examine the perception of aged employees on the decisions to retire or retain in work organizations.
- Suggest policy and practice recommendations for government, employers, and other stakeholder groups on engaging aged employees in organizations.

### **1.4 Methodology**

The research was designed to investigate the ability of engaging aged employees in public sector organizations and aims to promote a harmonic deployment of young and aged employees in organizations. Therefore, the following research methodology was adopted:

Initially, a comprehensive literature survey based on research papers, articles, books, past dissertations, and electronic media was performed to identify the nature of attitudes towards aged employees in different angles, and the potential factors and circumstances that lead aged employees to continue work. The current status of recruiting aged employees to public sector organizations was evaluated through the preliminary investigation of this study. Data for the preliminary investigation was collected through interviews from 81 public sector organizations and analyzed by descriptive statistics. The managerial level perception of engaging aged employees and aged employees to retain on work was examined in the detailed investigation. Data for the detailed investigation was collected through a questionnaire and interviews, and analyzed by content analysis and descriptive statistics.

### **1.5 Scope and limitations**

This research considers the attitude of engaging aged people in public sector organizations in the Hambanthota district in Sri Lanka. As this study does not represent a national cross-section of aged employees, the extent to which the results obtained in this study can be generalized to other areas is unknown.

### **1.6 Chapter Breakdown**

The dissertation of this study comprises five chapters as depicted below:

#### **Chapter 1 - Introduction**

Chapter One presents the background of the study, aims and objectives, the scope of the study, and organization of the report with a brief introduction to the research methodology.

#### **Chapter 2 - Literature Review**

Chapter Two synthesizes the current knowledge by referring books, journal articles, dissertations, websites, and other publications to understand the theoretical background of demographic trends of the world and Sri Lanka, in deploying aged employees into organizations.

### **Chapter 3 - Research process and methodology**

Chapter Three describes the research approach adopted in this research. This chapter explains data collection and data analysis methods deployed to validate the research output.

### **Chapter 4 - Data Analysis and Findings**

This chapter explicated research findings of this study.

### **Chapter 5 - Conclusions and Recommendations**

Chapter Five provides conclusions and recommendations derived from the study, based on empirical findings gathered through the preliminary survey and detailed investigation.

### **1.7 Summary**

Chapter one summarizes the subsequent chapters by identifying the background to the research study strengthened by the literature review. It further emphasizes the aims and objectives of the research together with the scope and limitations, and the research methodology in a nutshell.

## CHAPTER 2

### 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, intended to combine the current knowledge regarding research area in order to refer the research problem further. This chapter presents the global trends of population with respect with different dimensions as well as its effect in Sri Lanka. Further, this chapter also review the consequences of population aging and current policies and measures taken to secure aged population and ultimately review the effectiveness of retaining aged employees in work and different attitudes towards aged employees.

#### 2.2 Population Aging Trends

Population ageing is mechanism of older individuals' share is proportionally larger than that of the total population. According to Mirkin (2001), this is a phenomenon of the 'demographic transition' in which both death and birth rates decline from higher to lower levels. According to Bell and Rutherford (2013) predicted the percentage of aged people more than 60 years will be doubled within next few decades. Further, the percentage of aged people is more than the percentage of children under 15 years and this was occurred in the first time. However, World Health organization (2017) in their report consider population aging can perceive as a victory in public health policies as well as socio economic development.

According to Arrowsmith and McGoldrick (1996), the transformations of the demographic structure of any country will related to changes in one or a combination of three demographic drivers such as changes in life expectancy, fertility rates and net migration levels. However, they admitted progressive increase in life expectancy and the reduction in fertility levels as most prominent factors. As reported by United Nation population report (2016), there is a considerable decline of fertility level from 1995 value, which is four, and in 2016 it is 2.4. A research done by Siddhisena and Ratnayake (1998) identified advance contraception methods as well as rising opportunity costs of childbearing related to the participation of women in the workforce as major contributors to decline demand of children. Further, the life expectancy of people also increases in global basis and in the near term, this trend

expected to continue (Shantha, 2003). Migration within and between countries has also seen a progressive increase during the last few decades due to greater regional and internal conflicts and greater migratory opportunities as relaxation of policy barriers (Siddhisena and Ratnayake, 1998).

Ageing is progressing at a much more rapid rate in low-income countries (Rajan, 2013). An index used to measure the rate of ageing is the doubling time, which measures the time required for a country to double the percentage of elderly in total population (Vodopivec, Milan, Arunathilaka & Nisha, 2008). Doubling time has taken between 45 and 135 years in developed countries (Rannan-Eliya, 1998). However, the same report has investigated the doubling time of Asian countries and concluded that Sri Lanka has much less doubling time, which is slightly less than two decades, which is lowest in the region. As illustrated in the report by Von Hippel, Kalokerinos and Henry (2013) the Doubling times of some selected Asian and developed countries shown in Figure 2.1. It also emphasizes the trend of population aging in Sri Lanka.

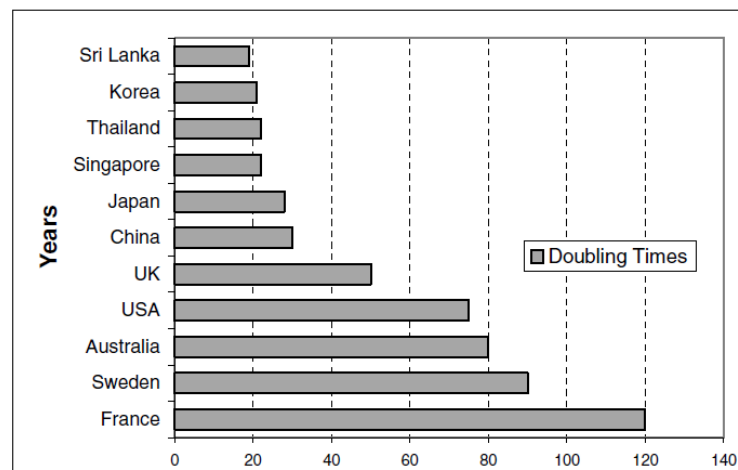


Figure 2. 1 Doubling times for selected developed and Asian countries

Source: Von Hippel, Kalokerinos and Henry (2013)

### 2.3 Definition for aging

Generally, the aging of the population means to increase in the relative population of elder population. Yet, there is a considerable confusion when define the age of elderly. In western world, 65 years considered as cutoff age while in developing world 60 and above is considered (Myers, 1985). In Sri Lanka, age 60 considered as retirement age as most common retirement age in public sector and private sector (Siddisena 2001).

However, in some private sector organizations and in agriculture sector workers specifically the farmers continued to work even after 60 years and continue to work as long as they physically fit to perform economic activities (Gaminiratne, 2004). Further, Employees in few autonomous organizations such as academic staff of universities also allowed to work up to 65 years. Moreover, as stated by Gaminiratne (2004) in certain private and Non-Government Organizations the retirement age extended even beyond 65 if they actively work. Subsequently, it is a very complex process to rationalize a single age for commencement of aging.

#### **2.4 Pace of Population Aging in Sri Lanka**

Indeed, population aging is a universal issue affected by most countries in the world. It emerges particularly considerable in Sri Lanka as it continuously experiencing the fastest phase of ageing in south Asian region (Shantha, 2003). The trend of population aging, illustrated in Figure 2.2 as a report published by World Bank in 2015. Even more, according to Senanayaka (2012), the share of aged population in Sri Lanka has increased from 0.36 million people in 1946 to 5.3 million people in 1953 and to 10.8% of total population in 2003. According to the predicted data the author suggested that this proportion of aged population will further rise to one quarter of Sri Lanka's population by 2030.

The rapidity of population ageing can reveal by analyzing the time duration to become twice the proportion of aged people. As reported by Siddhisena, (2004) it has taken about 56 years to double the value of population to double from 1946. However, in that report, the author presumed that the second doubling would occur more rapidly, which is approximately in 25 years and it is due to the rapid increment in the pace of ageing in the year 2000. Even more, it is worth to analyze the period from 1946 to 2031 to have an idea about this trend as shown in Table 2.1 as reported by De Silva (1993). Median age is also another determinant, which reflect the trend of population aging. This can also define as single index that summarizes the age distribution of a population. According to the data represented in Table 2.1 the median age increase gradually from 21 in 1946 to approximately 40 years in 2030, which represent the trend of population aging in Sri Lanka (De Silva, 1993).

Further, the index of aging which is calculated by dividing the percentage of aged people over 60 years by younger people less than 15 years, is also represent the

variation of demographic structure of the country. According to a statistical analysis done by Silva (2007), there will be much greater proportion of aged people in Sri Lanka than younger people and that trend is represented in Figure 2.3. Accordingly, the percentage of younger population had increased until 1950 in Sri Lanka due to the high fertility rate in that period and then the proportion gradually declined.

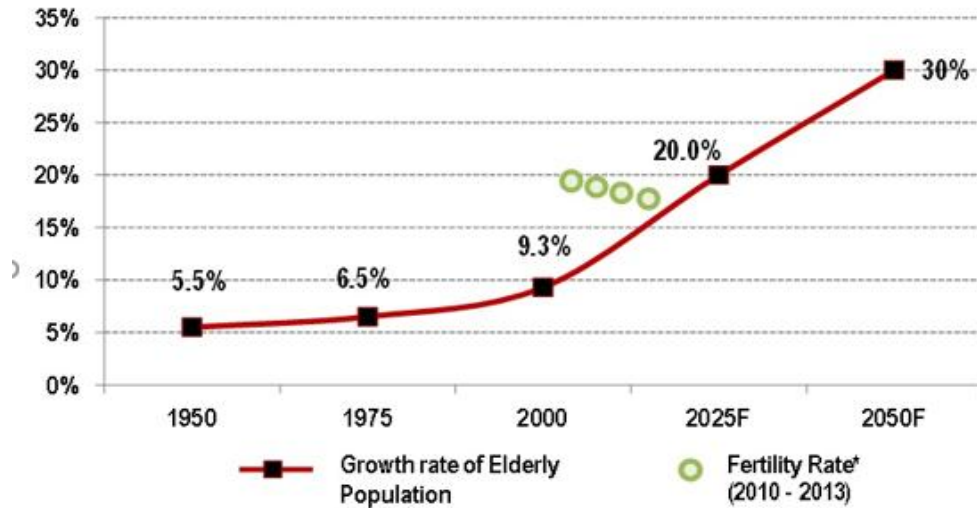


Figure 2. 2 Growth rate of aged population

Source : World Bank (2015)

Table 2. 1 The total population, percentage of population aged 60+ years

Year	Population ('000)	Percentage of age 60+	Median age
1946	665	5.4	21.3
1953	8098	5.4	20.8
1963	10582	6	19.4
1971	12690	6.3	19.7
1981	14847	6.6	21.4
1991	17259	8.1	25
2001	18873	9.8	27.8
2011	20327	13	31.5
2021*	22324	17.8	36.3
2031*	23129	21.9	39.5

Source: De Silva (1993)

Shift of age structure will also result a transformation in the shape of the age pyramid of the country. The age pyramid of Sri Lanka convert from broad base to barrel shape at the apex and it visually illustrated in Figure 2.4.

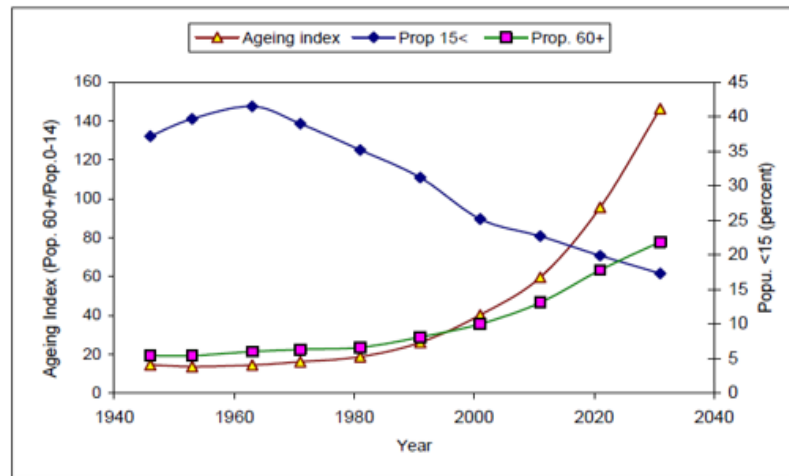


Figure 2. 3 The proportion of minors (less than 15 years and the index of ageing within 1950-2030

Source: De Silva (2007)

Siddhisena (2004) in his report divided aged population in to two as young aged, which is between age 65 to 74 and old aged, which is above 75. He interpreted through a statically|projection that the proportion of young aged (65-74) as well as old aged (75+) increases during present and future decade and the phase of aging is higher in young aged group.

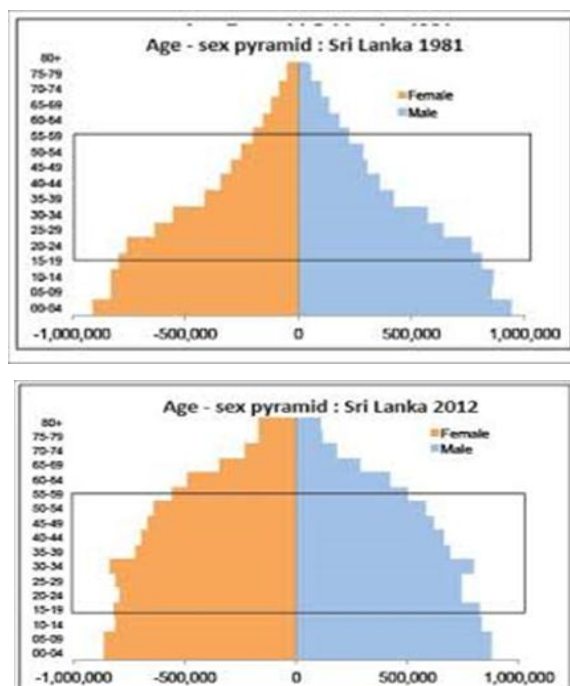




Figure 2. 4 Shift of age pyramid of Sri Lanka from year 1981 to 2012

Sauce: Department of statistics 2012

## **2.5 Consequences of population aging**

Rapid increase in the percentage of aged population will have many effects for various sectors of society either positively or negatively. However, the critical challenge of developed countries due to population aging is primarily deal with the negative impact related with the financial growth of any country while, for a developing country like Sri Lanka the issues of population aging is more complex as it compounded as it deal with many economic as well as social factors (Bandara, 2017). Even though, the phase of aging process in many developed countries corresponding with economic growth and industrialization, in Sri Lanka ageing occurred regardless with economic growth (Siddhisena, 2004). Gaminiratne, (2004) in his report evaluated the poverty associated with the ageing in Sri Lanka with other developing countries and concluded that the Sri Lanka tend to face many unique social challenges due to population aging rather than poverty.

### **2.5.1 Economic Consequences**

According to statistics in 2012, only a ten percent of the aged people receive monthly pension to spend on the requirements in old age. Further, three percent receive a very insignificant amount of income under non-pension government assistance schemes, as a result vast majority of aged people have to rely on family support as key for their wellbeing (Bandara, 2017). However, that paper further discussed practical issues hinder this traditional family support culture to guard aged people within family due to modernization of Asian societies.

Concurrently, aging affects the economy of whole country. There is a considerable expenditures by the Governments to pensions schemes and also it exhibits an increasing trend during past few decades and it is illustrated in Table 2.2 and through Figure 1.6 and projected values for 2050 (Gaminiratne, 2004). According to his calculations the number of employees retired from the public sector who is eligible to have pension income has increased every year by 2.61 per cent from 1992 to 2002, while expenditure has also risen 14 percent annually. According to statistical data by Department of pensions the number of pensioners increase by about fifty thousand from 2015 to 2017. Consequently, government have to spend more on paying pensions

and that will result reduction of government savings. It will result in the decrease of the entire development as well as investments which will affect the economic development of the country.

However, Prasannath (2013) in his report stated that the income gained from pension schemes in Sri Lanka is not enough to cover expenditure for health as well as routine living in later life. In the other hand many informal and private sector employees suffer from inadequacy of income in their old age as they do not have pensions after they quit from work. It is estimated, out of 6.7 million in the work force about 3 million workers are employed under private or informal sector and are not covered by any formal pension or provident fund to secure their old age. (Sandaratne, 2004)

Table 2. 2 Number of pensioners and pensions expenditure 1990-2002

Year	Number of pensioners	Increment	% of Increment	Pension Expenditure in Millions (Rs.)	% of increment in pension expenditure
1992	303832			7786	
1994	320824	16992	5.6	12843	64.9
1996	344824	24000	7.5	17204	34
1998	358228	13404	3.9	19428	12.9
2000	371722	13494	3.8	20742	5.4
2002	394325	22603	6.1	31515	53.9

Sauce : Gamiiratne, 2004

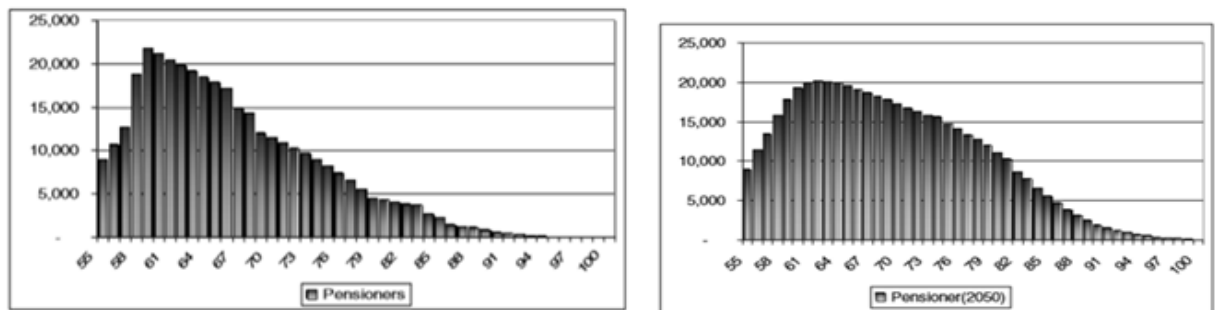


Figure 2. 5 Distribution of pensions among age in year 2000 and projected values for 2050.

Sauce: Gamiiratne, 2004

### 2.5.2 Health consequences

Further, there are several health consequences due to aging. Aged people require more concern and treatment than younger people as aging tend to increase the risks of many diseases and disorders (Abeykoon, 2000). However, preventing such health issues is hard as physical and intrinsic capacities of people deteriorate with aging. Concurrently, geriatric syndromes also arise as the biological change due to aging (Lokubalasooriya 1999). Further, immune cognitive and sensory functions also affected due to aging (Abeykoon, 2000). As stated in the report by Institute of policy studies in Sri Lanka (2017) ninety percent of aged population suffer from some kind of chronic disease. Further, that report identified Dementia as another common health issue among aged population in Sri Lanka. However, this health issues among aged population imply the urged need of long-term health care for aged population in Sri Lanka. However, Menike (2016) investigated the health condition of rural and urban aged people and Table 2.3 illustrated the results of the study. According to that result, more than 70% of people in age group 60-65 is in good health condition and further more than 60% of people in the age group 65-70 are good or normal health conditions.

Table 2. 3 Health status of aged people 2016

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
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>19</b>

Source: Menike (2016)

### 2.5.3 Effect to the labour force

Population aging may also leads shrinking of the labour force and even slowdown of labour force growth (Vodopivec et.al, 2008). Further, this scenario affects the composition of labour market. According to the labour force projections data the labour fore in Sri Lanka exhibit a slight increment in next twenty years and then it tend to fall (De Silva; 2007). Even more, the Population aging will also have a significant effect on the composition of the labour market, with the share of workers

younger than 30 years significantly shrinking and the share of those older than 50 years strongly increasing. Further, as labour force growth is one of the major sources of economic growth indicators and this trend of decline of it after 2030 may contribute to a slowdown in GDP growth (Vodopivec et.al, 2008). As calculated Vodopivec et.al, (2008) and presented by Figure 2.6 show Sri Lanka's labour force activity rates trending downwards by age and gender. As the data illustrate, a significant number of men remain economically active even after 60 years. However, this can further improved by policy decisions such as extending working life of people.

Menike (2016) has also done a study regarding the "labour force participation" trends of urban and rural people and revealed that 27% of the aged population engaged in some type of employment and 83% of them are between the age group of 60-69 years. Further, 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 age increasing. However, this study also concluded that 61 % of employed aged people are in rural areas and suggested a reason for this situation as extensive opportunities of informal employments and self-employment opportunities in rural areas.

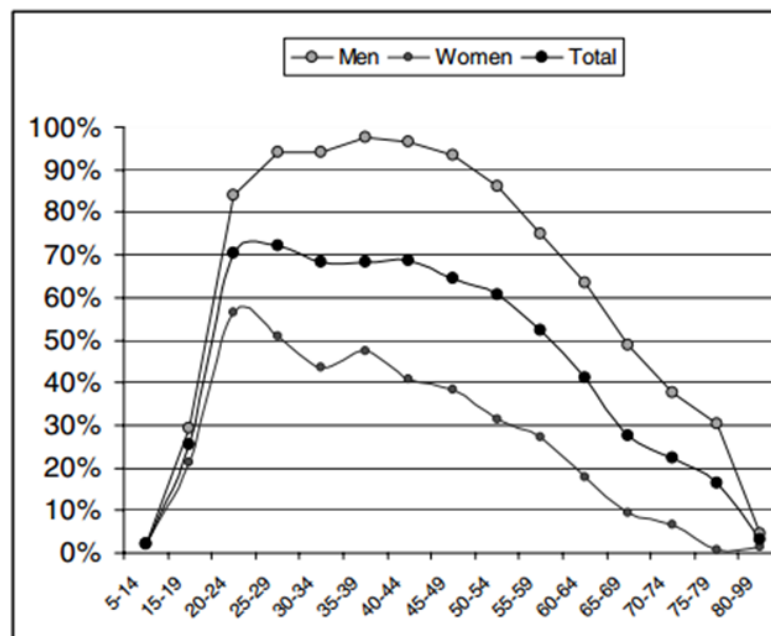


Figure 2. 6 Labour force participation by age and gender

Source: Vodopivec et.al (2008)

#### **2.5.4 Social consequences**

According to Hermalin (2002) due to less number of children in family associated with a huge burden to those children to take care of aged family members. Even more, that report stated the changes in education levels also led to transformation of attitudes and perceptions of obligations to provide familial support for aged people. Further, increase in labour force participation of women also affects the culture of take care of aged people within the family (Martin, 1990). World bank report (2007) recognized rural-urban migration, to seek employment also tend to reduce the number of caregivers available to provide support to aged family members.

Provision of adequate social security is a key requirement to enhance the living of aged population. According to Amarabandu (2001) social security is a process, which provide security to individuals as well as their dependence against life contingencies or due to natural causes such as sickness, disabilities, subsequent unemployment or loss of employment, sudden death. Many developed countries have comprehensive social security mechanisms for elder population. Yet, developing countries as Sri Lanka tend to provide restricted services due to lack of financial stability (Siddhisena; 2004). However, the concept of social security for aged people has a long history in Sri Lanka. Originating as a responsibility of children to guard parents. Traditionally the youngest male who receives the ancestral house to look after the parents. Wage laboured system which introduced by British empires tend to fade away this culture and ultimately, elderly homes were introduced to take care of aged parents which function under government as well as non-government organizations. However, the number of elderly homes is limited and cannot cater the demand (Bandara; 2017).

In addition, Ageing affects both supply side as well as demand side of the economy. The impact of ageing on the supply side can be evaluated in terms of its impact on growth of the labour supply, capital and productivity in performance. Demand-side effects are change the pattern of demand for services such as education, transport, housing, health care and the composition of public finances (Gaminiratne; 2004).

#### **2.6 Policies and measures taken to secure aged population**

The development of public policies for the elderly has been a highlight on the agenda of international health organizations, in the attempt to propose guidelines for nations that still need to set up social and care programs to respond to this population group's

emerging needs (World health organization, 2014). Care practices and policies, which cater aged population, is an integral part of any country due to the demographic transition of population aging in the world. However, the norms and assumptions that govern care policies of each country linked with economic, political, cultural and religious norms, values, and habits.

According to Fernandes and Soares (2012) in Brazil, the Federal Government took initiatives on behalf of aged people since 1970's, and in 1994, a national policy was established for this group. In that sense, the National Policy for the Elderly (PNI), launched in 1994 and regulated through Decree, which guarantees social rights to elderly people, by creating conditions to promote their autonomy, integration and effective participation in society and reaffirm their right to health at the different care levels. Government of India has also formulated various policies and implemented various programmes and activities for the elderly, the 1999 National Policy for the Elderly, revised in 2011, has provided some very critical insights and implications for the ageing population and even more, the well-being of aged persons has been mandated in the Constitution of India (Singh, Bharati & Sanyal, 2015). Accordingly, the article 41, a Directive Principle of State Policy, has directed that the State shall, within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provision for securing the right of public assistance in cases of old age.

According to Lima, Levav, Jacobsson and Rutz (2003), in Turkey boarding homes for elderly people were opened by municipalities upon imposing of the liability to protect elderly people and also government tend to encourage various associations, minorities and real persons opened such facilities to offer services to elderly people. Further, according to the authors' based on Article 17 of Ministry of Health and Welfare Organization Law No. 3017, the Directorate General of Social Services was established in 1963 with the purpose of organizing all kinds of social assistance and security services, caring for, lodging and rehabilitating dependent elderly people and providing social security for them.

### **2.6.1 Current Policies and measures upon aged population in Sri Lanka**

There are several policies and methods to assist the aged population in Sri Lanka. These methods consist with pensions, provident funds, public assistance systems, their own savings, wage labour and family community support (Siddhisena, 2005). Further.

The report stated that the retirement system in Sri Lanka consists of a combination of fully funded and pay-as-you-go schemes covering both formal and informal sector workers. However, these schemes cover only 25% of working age population (Milan & Nisha 2008). This leads a large proportion of aged population remain without any formal social security coverage. According to Gaminiratne (2004) found that the share of pension coverage in Sri Lanka is higher when compare with other South Asian Countries. Accordingly, author shown that the pension coverage is 10% in India and 7% in Bangladesh.

First organized social security scheme in Sri Lanka is “public servants pension scheme”, this cater the permanent public servants and a retired public servant is entitling for a lifetime monthly noncontributory pension which is a privilege (Shantha, 2003). To enhance the social security of public corporations and private sector employees in 1958 Provident Fund Act was enacted by the parliament. This is mandatory social security scheme to cover public corporations and private sector employees which has now became the largest pension fund operated in Sri Lanka (Samaraweera , 2014).

Further, Several Insurance companies and some banks provide self-financed social security schemes for aged people which is open for general public (Menike ,2016). Any person who enrolled to this scheme after completion of payment of agreed installments are entitled to a lifetime pension. Although, in mid-1980 government has introduced voluntary pension scheme for informal sector workers that was unsuccessful due to many reasons such as lack of commitment (Prasannath, 2003). Further in 1987 from an act of parliament established a pension scheme for farmers, this scheme s contributory but subsidized by the government and in 1991 government has launched a pension scheme for Fishermen (Samaraweera , 2014).

In addition, to expand the social assistance for specific groups such as the poor, Sri Lankan government already launched large social assistance programmes and its recurrent expenditure is equal to the size to the country’s health budget and large proportion of that is for the government’s principal poverty alleviation which is Samurdi programme (Bandara; 2017). In addition, Non-Government organization “Help age” Sri Lanka undertakes many programmes to assist aged population in Sri Lanka. Further, according to their web site they conduct workshops to enhance the

awareness on ageing and population issues as well as youth education programmes on the ageing population. “Help age” Sri Lanka operates about 52 Care Centers for aged people all over the country. Further, they conduct pre-retirement seminars for elders and medical clinics, which specifically aimed for aged people. This organization also register individuals as well as organizations, which provide services for elders in annual basis to support aged population when they inquire such support. Even more that support financially for elderly care homes.

The Act no 9 of 2000, which passed by the parliament, was established to promotion welfare and protection of rights of elders (Gaminiratne, 2004). This has made provision for the establishment of a National Council for elders, a National Secretariat for Elders, and a National Fund for Elders and a Maintenance Board for Elders. However, this is a giant step put forward by the government on aged people as until 2000 there was no proper legislation, which cater general, social and financial security of older persons (Prasannath 2003). Even more, the government of Sri Lanka put forward several schemes and programmes in order to assist the older population in Sri Lanka and their management bodies presented in Table 2.4 as presented by Prasannath (2013).

Table 2. 4 Government Schemes and Managing Institution

Scheme	Managing Institution
Public service pension scheme	Department of Government
Employees provident fund scheme	Employees provident fund of central Bank
Employees’ Trust fund scheme	Employees Trust Fund Board
Pension and social security Benefit	Insurance Scheme for farmers agricultural and agrarian Board
Pension and social security Benefit	Sri Lanka Social Security Board
Public Assistant Scheme	Department of Social Services

Sauce: Prasannath (2013)

## 2.7 Consequences of extending the working life to address the issue of aging

Extending the working life can be viewed as a common solution, which can find on almost every policymaker’s agenda to address the issue of aging. Further, many researchers suggest that altering human resource policy to retain aged workers in the labour force longer is one of the best measures which can prevent the economy and the individual households from excess burden of old age dependents (Boskin, 1977;



The World Bank, 2008). In other hand, this will provide a practical solution to address the emerging issue of shortages of trained workers by many organizations around the world. According to World Economic Forum (2011), talent gaps will also a prominent feature in many parts of the world and ultimately, it results a barrier for sustainable economic growth.

In Sri Lanka as calculated by Vodopivec, Milan, Arunatilake and Nisha (2008) through a study there is a prominent trend in regular full time public and private sector to withdraw from labour market earlier than casual and self-employed workers. Finding of this research is illustrated in Figure 2.7. According to the figure at age, 60 employees in public sector completely retire from work while many private sector workers also retired. In contrast, only 23 and 18 percent of workers retired when they reach 60 years. Even more, virtually no one work after 69 years in regular public sector or private sector while nearly half of casual and self-employed people work in full time when they are even more than 69 years. This reveals that there is a possibility of people to work beyond current retirement age. However, there is limited insights in literature, regarding the actual view of employers to deal with aging workforce. In fact, Strategy of extending working life is questionable to implement without an active support and commitment of employers. (Vickerstaff et al., 2003).

To increase the working life of aged employees, Nielson and Farmer (2000) identified the significance to evaluate the probability of aged employee to get a job. That report concluded that employers have not been especially fond of aged workers and also some employers use early retirement incentives to get aged workers to leave.

Extending the working life will obviously have positive effects as discussed above as well as negative effects (Sum & Fogg; 1990). Unarguably, it will have a positive effect on pension schemes and social security schemes as the length of contributory period increased (Shantha, 2003). As a result, the scheme become more financially viable and operational feasible. In contrast, this will hinder the opportunity of new recruits. On average approximately 100000 replacements will be blocked per year if one year is extended from existing retired age (Prasannath 2003).

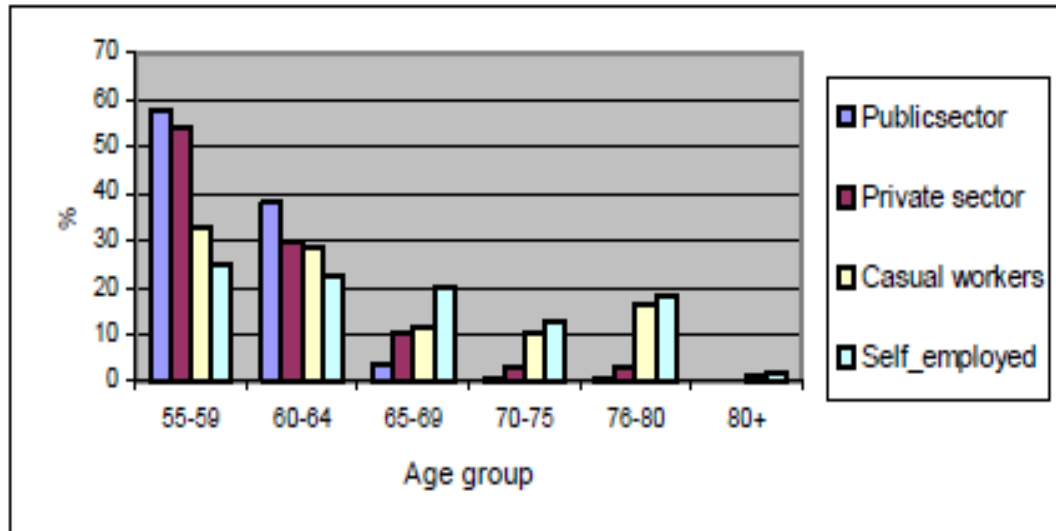


Figure 2. 7 Percentage of retirements by age groups

Source: Vodopivec, Milan, Arunatilake and Nisha (2008)

However, today's aged workers are far better educated than those of two decades ago. Even more, they are more physically fit which should enhance the employment prospects of aged workers (Manke 2016). To create such environment, evaluate and investigation of age-related factors particularly of aged workers' motivation on employment is vital. Therefore, studying the attitudes towards aged workers will provide controls towards preparing comprehensive policy solutions to Extending the working life of employees (Bandara; 2017).

### 2.7.1 Retirement Age of Aged Population

The age of retirement is also a critical issue to payments of social security benefits for older people. Due to the increasing life expectancy of population, there were many debates to raise the age of retirement all over the world (Glover & Branine 2001). Figure 2.8 exhibits the huge cross-country variations in the retirement age of working populations. The numbers vary widely between the poles of Mexico with retirement age of 78 years and Bulgaria with the retirement age of about 58 years. However, occupational distribution is also have an impact on the average retirement age of any country and retirement age may differ across occupations.

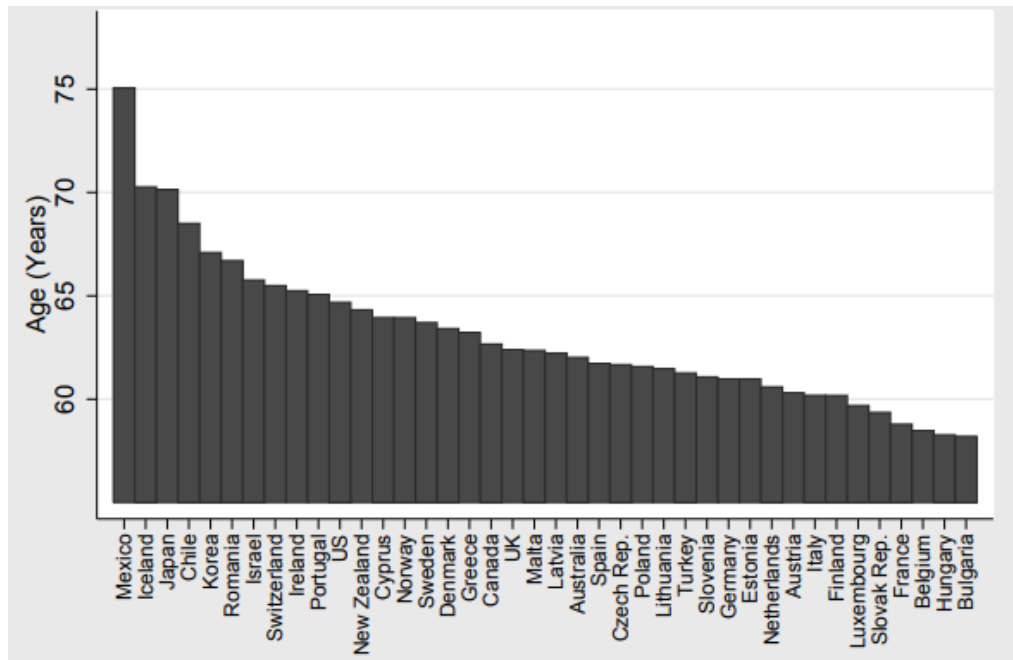


Figure 2. 8 The effective age of retirement of working populations

Source: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (2000)

In Sri Lanka, public sector general retirement age is 55 years and can be extended up to 60 years (Shantha, 2003). However, in 2015 a new circular was issued to re-recruit the retired employees in contract basis to government sector. Further, in ETF and EPF schemes the retirement age for 55 years for males and 50 for females (Shantha, 2003). However, an appropriate age for retirement considering the increase in life expectancy at birth is not still revised. Hence there is a practical question to be considered whether to increase the retirement age.

### 2.7.2 Reasons for Retirement

Most workers are pushed away from jobs when they reach 60 years. However, according to the calculations done by Vodopivec, Milan, Arunatilake and Nisha (2008) in their study based on a survey on aging by World Bank in 2006 for full-time regular public and private sector employees, the main reason for retirement is the mandatory retirement age while casual and self-employed workers retired due to health consequences. This is illustrated in Figure 2.9. Conversely, by far the most compelling reason for retirement at all ages for casual workers and self-employed was health issues. Interestingly, as illustrated by Vodopivec et al. (2008) personal reasons are a prominent reason for retirement for casual workers and self-employed than for regular workers.

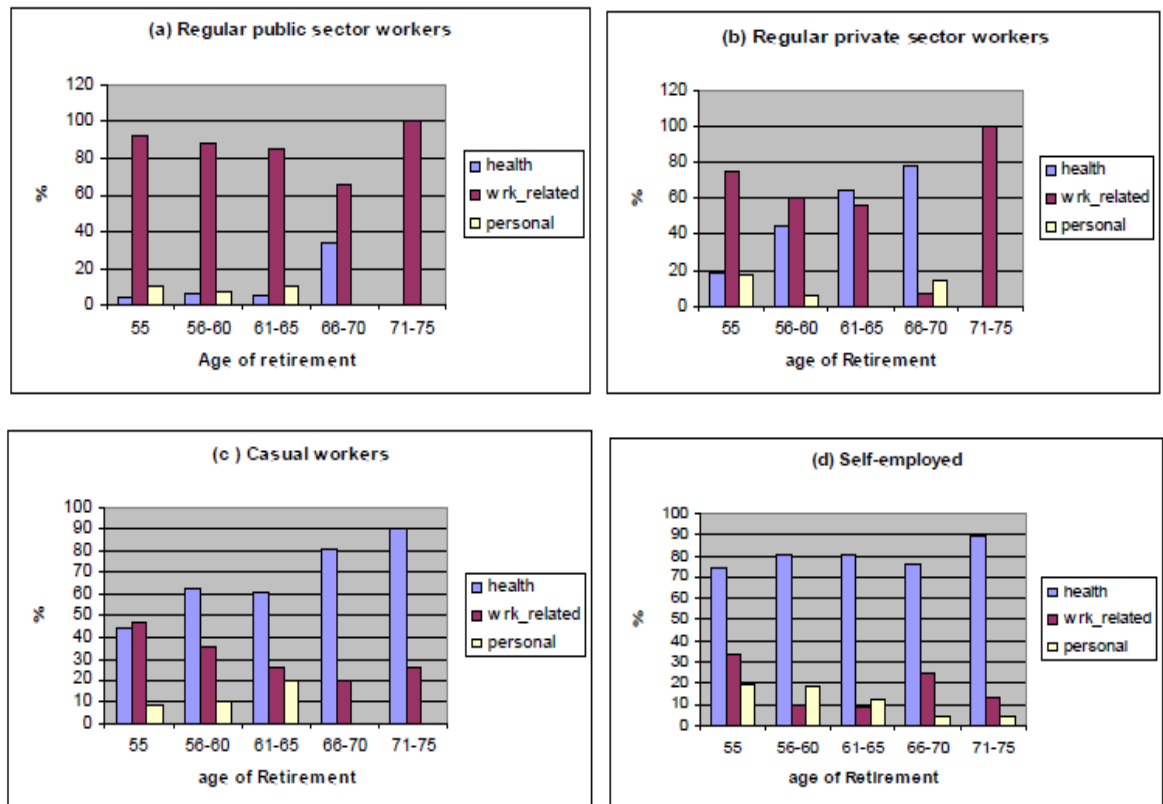


Figure 2. 9 Reasons for retirement from full time work

Source: Vodopivec, Milan, Arunatilake, Nisha (2008)

### 2.7.3 Reasons of Aged Workers Retain on Work

Although working beyond traditional retirement age has suggested by many policy makers as a strategy to cope with the population aging, it is vital to identify the factors affection employees' decision of retain on work. However, very little research available to examine this phenomenon. Many researches given their prime emphasis on financial concerns related to retirement, such as reduction or elimination of retiree medical benefits after retirement, increases in the costs of healthcare, inadequacy of social security benefits (Brandon, 2011; Moeller, 2010). Further, according to Greenhouse (2012) some European countries has extended the age requirement to obtain full Social Security benefits from the government also encouraged many employees to work longer. Studies of Moeller (2010) show the importance of employer-sponsored healthcare and related benefits as a reason to continue working.

Several researchers have reported that the need expressed by aged workers to stay active physically and mentally by working longer (Brandon, 2011; Moeller, 2010; Pitt-Catsouphes & Smyer, 2005). They believed that staying active would tend to have positive impact on health. Cappelli (2014), emphasizes the desire for social interaction as a reason to retain in work as working provides a sense of fellowship, community, and connectivity between people, which is not prominent after retirement.

According to Brandon (2011), some aged workers desire to continue work as they enjoy the work they do. Further, Moeller, 2010 identified desire to remain busy and avoid dullness in life as reasons to work longer. Nilsson (2012) also observed that working longer is a lifestyle choice and therefore more motivating and worthy than ordinary activities associated with leisure in retirement. Moeller, 2010 also identified the requirement of aged worker to engage in a new and different career or new things as a reason for remaining at work. However, he has not identified this a major reason common to many. Further, some aged people view their job as an opportunity to be useful in the society. However, this is common among aged people who do not have children at home (Nilsson, 2012).

There findings conclude that aged worker continue to work for several reasons and many of which are the same motivations found in younger workers. However, this retain on work will have one significant effect to the economy of the country. As even a younger worker quit their position and move on to another company will not affect the overall labour shortage in the country while as many aged employees after retirement tend move to non-employment situations to spend life such as participate in various social clubs, develop hobbies, perform volunteer work will directly affect to the growing labour shortage.

## **2.8 Attitudes towards Elder Employees**

As the labour force ages, academics and policy makers are paying increasing attention to retain aged workers in national labour markets for longer (Glover and Branine; 2001). However, extending the working life is unlikely to adopt without an active support of employers. As stated by Brooke (2015), according to human capital theory, productivity of employees depends on initial education and experience acquired through living. Hence it is worth to admit that aged people will be more productive as they have accumulated more divergent experience in life through experience. As a

result, many European countries tend to provide a government bonus for people who work beyond 65 years (Brooke 2015). However, still there are limited insights into how employers, colleagues are behaving toward older workers, (European Commission, 2004, 2005). Following are some findings through several research studies.

A survey done by interviewing 406 human resources executives found that aged workers were more reliable and have superior skills than younger workers, but were less suitable for training and less flexible in taking on new assignments. Further, study highlighted that aged employees have higher health insurance costs (Barth, Michael, William & Philip, 1993).

In 1997, through a telephone survey of several personal managers found that aged workers as being difficult to train, unable to adapt to new technologies and too cautious. However, they were thought to be more reliable than younger workers, to be relatively productive and to offer a good return on expenditure (Hayward, Taylor, Smith and Davies, 1997).

A study based on a case study reveals that aged employees are more likely to do a job as a boss and they are relatively rigid and resistant to change (Henkens & Kene, 2005). Even more a survey of 800 Dutch managers found that aged workers as more productive and reliable, but less adaptable and relatively resistant to innovation and technical change. Further, this survey reveals that managers were not especially interested in extending the careers of aged workers. (Henkens & Kene, 2005).

Patel, Tinker and Corna (2018) conducted a study to identify the younger workers' attitudes and perceptions towards older colleagues and found that some younger employees valued working with older colleagues as they believe that their differing characteristics are complementary, others felt that it leads to intergenerational conflict due to contrasting approaches towards work. Further, the study identified increased knowledge, experience, reliability and better social skills as positive perceptions of aged employees whilst as resistant to change, slower at using technology and lacking the drive to progress as common negative perceptions. According to an investigation done by Brooke and Taylor in 2004 through a survey of nationally representative sample via interviewing personal managers of United Kingdom found that strengths and weaknesses of aged workers and younger workers are reflections of each other. The positive characteristics of younger workers such as flexibility, computing

skills, fitness and strength, whereas the frequent weaknesses of aged workers were resistance to change, poor health fitness and computing skills and reluctance to take new responsibilities.

Another British study by McGoldrick and Arrowsmith (2001) focused on motivational factors of aged workers and younger workers and uncovered that qualitative attributes such as service, pride in the job, cheerfulness and reliability are more commonly motivating factors of aged workers while younger workers are motivated through quantitative attributes such as salary, training facilities.

Corresponding to a survey of 2,000 employees from 20 organizations in United Kingdom by Van Dalen, Henkens, and Schippers, (2010) to investigate the views of younger managers towards aged employees concluded that younger managers are more uncomfortable to communicate with aged employees when giving instructions due to the age gap and also they do not prefer to take jobs with increased responsibility. Although, many European governments establish policies to promote age friendly workplace many researches over many years has shown that widespread age discrimination continues to affect aged employees' deployment, job security, promotion as well as retention (McGoldrick & Arrowsmith, 2001).

Feldman (2010) through a study reveals that aged employees are a vital asset for an organization in the sense of their experience and the knowledge. Further, author stated that the aged employees have a strengthened network of communication within the industry they work and more suitable to perform supervisory level positions as they are bossy. In 2008, Ng and Feldman examined the effects of age on performance outcomes and stressed the need of novel occupation designs and training programs to enhance the specific needs of aged employees to have an optimum outcome. A significant amount of research has investigated the perceived attributes of older workers. Aged workers may be perceived as harder to train, less able to keep up with technological change, more accident prone, and less motivated (Rosen & Jerdee, 1976; Stagner, 1985). They are also seen as dependable, cooperative, conscientious, consistent, and knowledgeable and have long lasting social relations (Rosen & Jerdee, 1976; Schwab & Heneman, 1978; Chiu, Snape & Redman, 2001). Barth, Michael, William & Philip (1993) in a study reveals that aged employees are Experienced and have to perform organizational work accurately and can be considered loyal and

reliable source of employees to the organization. In a recent study Corna (2018) revealed that aged employees are committed to organization than younger employees and have higher productivity in organizational routine functions.

Overall findings of previous research suggest that the relationships between managers' attributions of aged and younger workers and staff deployment policies and organizational behavior are considerably similar. Yet, there is a direct relationship between age and the behavior of employees. However, most previous studies relied on attitudinal surveys through managers at one point in time. Attitudes towards aged employees among subordinates, clients and the aged employee itself have yet to be revealed in qualitative research on workplace processes.

## 2.9 Distribution of aged people in Sri Lanka

As described in previous sections increase in life expectancy is fundamentally coupled with population ageing. Perera (2012) visualized the regional distribution of life expectancy at birth for males and females in Sri Lanka and it presented in Figures 2.10 and 2.11 and respectively. The Figures clearly show that the life expectancy of female is higher in all districts. Further, other than districts in North central province and Northern Province all other districts life expectancy is higher.

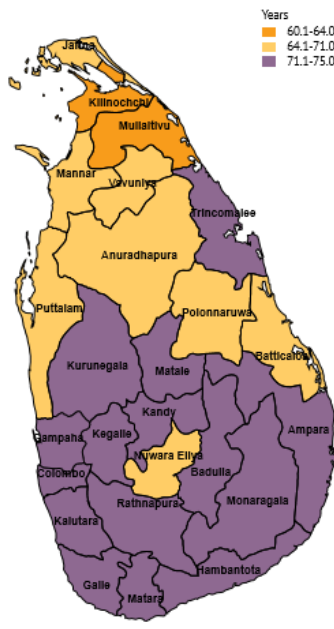


Figure 2. 10 Life expectancy of male

Source: Perera (2012)

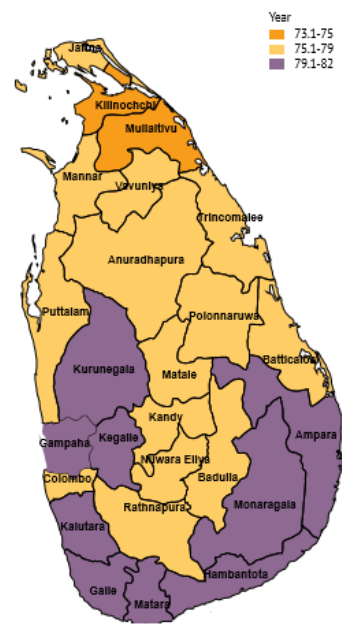


Figure 2. 11 Life Expectancy of female

Source: Perera (2012)



Further, according to a study by Silva (2008) ageing population unevenly distributed among all provinces of Sri Lanka and the distribution of total population and ageing population by Province is shown in Figure 4.12. According to the Figure, more than 70 % of aged people live in four provinces in Sri Lanka namely Western, Central, Southern and North-western.

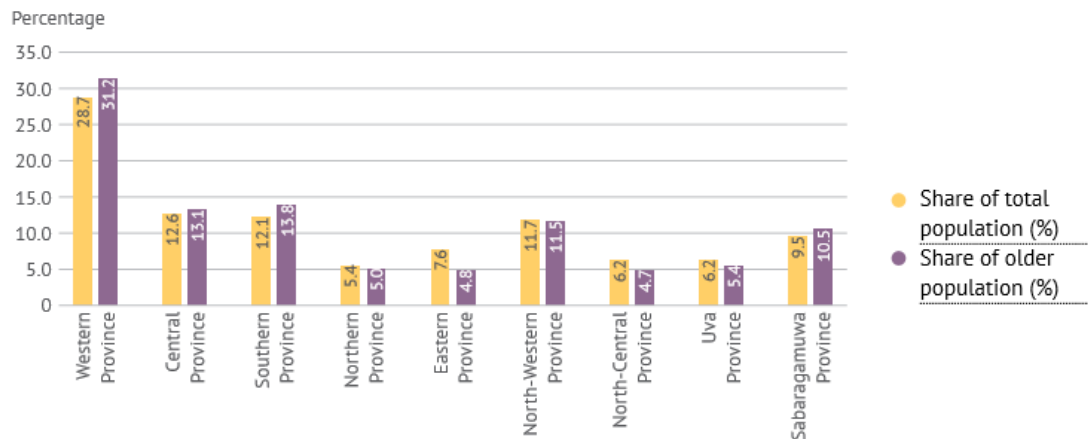


Figure 2. 12 Provincial distribution of total and aged population in Sri Lanka

Source: Perera (2012)

### 2.9.1 Justification of selection of Hambantota district as the case study

According to Figure 4.11 and 4.12 people in Hambantota district has higher life expectancy and it essentially leads higher aged population in that district. Further as illustrated in Figure 4.13 southern province has considerably higher number of aged people. As a result, Hambantota district located in southern province selected as the case study in this research.

## 2.10 Chapter summary

Population aging is a global issue and its effects are more complicated in developing countries than developed countries. There are several indicators which measure the pace of aging in any country such as Doubling times, Median age, Structure of age pyramid as well as aging index. Population aging affects various sectors of society either positively or negatively in any country and can be viewed under prominent themes such as economic consequences, health consequences, social consequences and in addition it affects the structure as well as composition of the labour market. Extending the working life can be viewed as a common solution, which can find on almost every policymaker's agenda to address the issue of skill shortage in labour market due to

population aging. Yet, lifting the retirement age might have positive and negative consequences, which is an integral process and require commitment from many parties such as employees as well as employers. Hence, the attitudes of employees, employers as well as managerial level should considered on engaging aged employees on organizations. Overall findings of previous research regarding attitudes on aged employees have considerable similarities and have a link on the culture of organization and nature of work to perform. However, most previous studies relied on attitudinal surveys through managers at one point in time.

Aged employees' motivation factors to retain on work also have similar importance to extend their working life as they themselves take this decision and literature reveal that those reasons do not differ with younger workers such as financial factors, personal factors.

Further, as the life expectancy of aged people is higher in Hambantota district and as there are large number of aged people in southern province, Hambantota district has selected to do the case study in this research.

## CHAPTER 3

### 3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 presented a detailed review of literature, which initially emphasize on the issue of population aging and its effect on the labour market and then it illustrates the advantages and challenges of extending working life as a solution to face the current problem of shortage in labour force. This chapter present the methodological framework adopted to conduct the research. Consequently, the research philosophy, research design, and research process have been broadly discussed along with the presentation of the data collection techniques and the data analysis.

#### 3.2 Research process

This research was carried out mainly to investigate the perceptions of engaging aged people in the organizations to empower aged people without considering them as a burden to the economy. Further, this study will also try to promote harmonic deployment of aged people in organizations, which tend to promote age aware culture in organizations rather age free culture as extending working life is considered as a most practical solution to the current issue of ageing of labour force. Proper research design not only minimize errors which tend to occur during the research but also it will reduce the potential errors by the researcher.

#### 3.3 Research Design

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012), presented the research onion model, which has a major influence on the methodology of this research work. The Research Onion model illustrates in Figure 3.1 literally shows the different elements involved in the research need to be carried out.

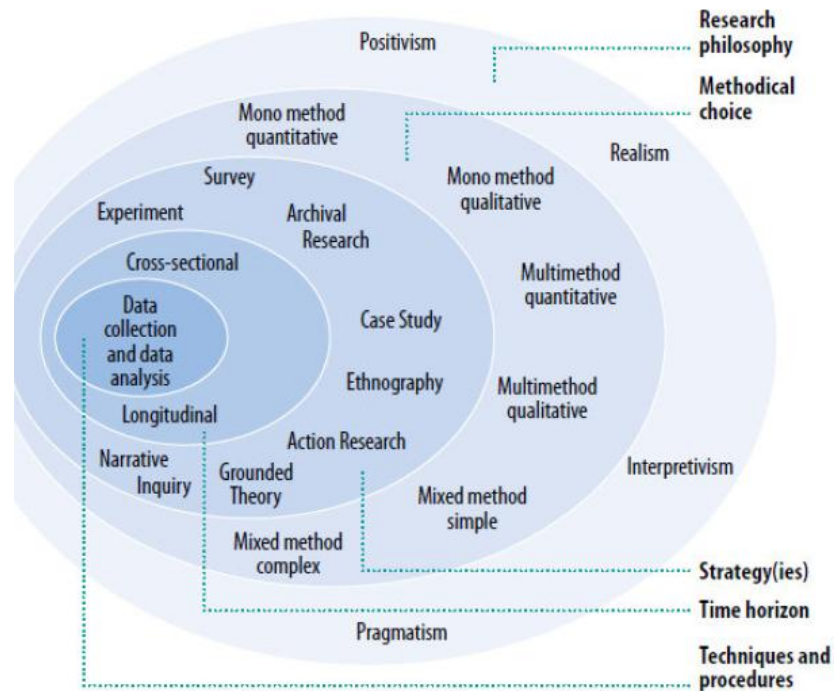


Figure 3. 1 The Research Onion

Sauce: Mark Saunders, Philip Lewis and Adrian Thornhill (2012)

### 3.4 Research Philosophy

According to Hudson and Ozanne (1998), the first attribute of any study is to orient a research problem to a particular philosophy and they describe it as the function of reality. Further, Carson, Gilmore, Perry and Gronhaug (2001), define it as the interrelationship between the reality and the researcher, or as a way of acknowledging the reality. The philosophical position of the research is highlighted in the research onion's outermost layer. According to Saunders and Lewis (2012), there are four different philosophical branches that define the presence of a research entity and the first is positivism, the second is realism, the third is interpretivism and the fourth is pragmatism.

In positivist philosophy, world is considered to be extrinsic and as a result there is just one unbiased truth regarding a research experience or position. Saunders and Lewis (2012) in their research stated that this can be done by the selection of a clear research theme, formulation of an appropriate theory and the selection of a suitable research

method. According to Hudson and Ozanne (2015), the researchers who adopt this approach emphasize the use of 'scientific method' for proposing and testing theories which are highly measurable and include structured data. This approach assist to test a theory, confirm a theory or revise a theory based on the analysis of the existing structured data (Saunders and Lewis, 2012).

Realism philosophy is fairly similar to Positivism in terms of philosophy as it deals with scientific investigation. Even though, the output of Realism establishes a research experience or position which is not dependent on the mind and the senses of the researcher, he may be influenced by their past experiences and world views. Kumar and Phrommathed (2005) categorized realism in to two groups such as direct realism and critical realism. In direct realism it is supposed that an accurate representation can be obtained through the experiences provided by the senses. Alternatively, in critical realism, it is believed that everything experienced through the senses is later processed by the mind subjectively.

Interpretivism integrates human interest into a research study (Lincoln and Guba, 2005). Accordingly, in this philosophy researchers assume that access to reality is only through social constructions such as language, consciousness, shared meanings, and instruments. Accordingly, this philosophy emphasizes qualitative analysis over quantitative analysis. As a result, Neuman (2006) indicates that defining a permanent reality becomes more challenging when adopting this method. This philosophy associated with finding a narrative for social phenomena in their natural environment through insights of respondents. Therefore, as stated by Saunders and Lewis (2012) this philosophy focuses on carrying out researches on people with an intention to understand their world view.

Khan (2011) stated that pragmatist researchers place significance in the ability of research findings to generate practical consequences and considered that the entire picture cannot be obtained from a single viewpoint and that there may be multiple realities that every research problem needs to consider.

### **3.4.1 Philosophical Orientation of Current Research Study**

This research elucidates the approach of the researcher with respect to investigate the perception of employees as well as aged employees' regarding the position of

extending the working life of aged people. As the initial stage of this study, a comparative survey was carried out among public sector Organizations in Hambantota District as a case study to investigate the current practices regarding the aged employees in public sector. Subsequently, questioner survey was also carried out to examine different perceptions on aged employees and their expectations with respect to the ageing of the workforce. In addition, the characteristics of aged workers and their recruitment and retention behavior was also studied. After ascertaining these perceptions, the research initiative tries to suggest realistic recommendations for governments and employers and other stakeholders on engaging aged people in organizations along with benefits and challengers of recruiting aged employees to organizations. Pragmatist philosophical orientation is mostly relate with the current study, as the perceptions towards engaging aged employees to public sector organizations cannot be viewed without taking into consideration their contextual realities

### **3.5 Research Approach**

According to Babbie (2010), a research approach mainly distinguishes the foundation of the research strategy and offer a direction to the research methods. Saunders and Lewis (2012) differentiated research approach into two parts such as inductive and deductive. They defined deductive approach utilize previously existing theories or knowledge for presenting the hypothesis or solution related to a specific situation and inductive approach as building new theories with collecting data and analyzing them.

#### **3.5.1 Research Approach of this study**

In this study, inductive as well as deductive approaches were utilized. During the initial phase, study used the deductive approach which leads to verify research Questionnaire based on available literature through critically evaluating current knowledge referring to various published knowledge. Preliminary Interviews were conducted with Managerial level employees to capture important insights of them to enrich the prepared Questionnaire. Current trends regarding aged employees in public sector organizations and the different perceptions towards aged employees were obtained through data collection and analyzing those data and that approach tend to be deductive. However, Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2012) in their book emphasized that

it is advantageous to utilize these two approaches as it tends to cover each other's restrictions.

### **3.6 Methodological Choice**

The emphasis of the succeeding layer of the research onion related to the research method which is adopted to conduct the study. According to Punch (2013), it is the fundamental and critical decision pointer for any research. In his research he describes two methods which can be utilized under this and specify them as mono method and multi method. In mono method one data, collection procedure is utilized and it is followed by a corresponding qualitative or quantitative analysis. In multi method, multiple methods are utilized for collecting as well as analyzing data. According to Collis and Hussey (2013), in multi method multiple quantitative or qualitative data collection techniques such as observations, interviews or questionnaire survey can be applied corporate with relevant data analysis procedures.

In addition, Creswell (2013), presented about another research method, named as mixed method which is progressively popular mode of research as this method tend to neutralize the limitations and biasedness of utilizing single method. As debated in literature mixed research method has two specific strategies to progress such as concurrent procedures and sequential procedures.

#### **3.6.1 Methodological Choice of Current Research Study**

This research collect qualitative data as well as quantitative data and ultimately mixed research design has been used in the study. These qualitative and quantitative data were ultimately analyzed separately. However, appropriate attention was given to qualitative data as well as quantitative data in data analysis.

### **3.7 Time Horizon**

The last layer of the research onion which is located just before the core, emphasizes the time horizon where the research has been undertaken. According to Bryman and Bell (2015), the research design can be differentiating in to two categories namely longitudinal and cross sectional. As distinguished in the literature, majority of researches conducted in cross-sectional time horizon, which means that offer a snapshot of a sample in particular point in time. However, according to Punch (2013), longitudinal time horizon implied process of change is studied over a period.

### **3.7.1 Time focus of Current Research study**

The current study adopted a cross section research strategy, which identifies the opinions of cross section of the study population. The study was conducted within the time period of September 2018 to April 2019.

### **3.8 Data collection techniques and Procedures**

There are several data collection techniques when conducting research. However, it is as important step as it directly affects the validity of research results. Further, the data collection technique has a direct relationship with research methodology. Lai and Waltman, (2008) stated that mixed method cooperated with semi-structured interviews as well as structured questionnaires will result reliable results, despite of the variation in the interpretation and analysis of collected data. Further, according to Brookhart and Durkin (2003) interviews and questionnaires are most frequently used data collection tools in mixed method, as it tends to investigate more practical solution for a research problem

Kendall (2008) stated that even though, a questionnaire will tend to obtain data from large sample, detailed perceptions on varying actions, believes and attitudes of respondents can be effectively obtained through qualitative interview. However, Oppenheim (1992) considered questionnaires as a more objective data collection tool for large samples. Further, he argued that misunderstanding, ignorance or respondent unreliability as some consequences which tend to threaten the reliable result from a research study. In addition, Bryman (2008) perceived questionnaire research as an excessively dependent tool on instruments and it gives more artificial sense disconnected from everyday life.

Silverman (2011) argues that interviews are not also a neutral tool as the data collected through interviews vastly depend on personal interactions and the results obtained



through interview contextually based and negotiated results. Yet, according to Bryman (2008) interviews offer an opportunity for the participants to explain their perspectives, elaborate on ideas on their own words and even ask for required clarifications where necessary. Further, questioning in interviews can be considered as a facilitator to manipulating or leading the interview process. However, Durkin (2003) viewed interviews as interpersonal in nature and as a result it is more likely that participants will respond in a socially desirable manner and it tends to offer partial or incomplete results to understand the participant's perspective.

### 3.8.1 Data collection techniques and Procedures of the Current Study

Even though according to the above literature, both interviews and questionnaires have their weaknesses, this is an effective method to gain direct responses from participants regarding their attitudes, beliefs, conceptions and understandings. Thus, these two methods are vital to conduct research on the investigation of human perceptions. Hence, both questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were utilized in this study. Questionnaires with a rating scale were used to collect the perspective of aged employees from Managers as well as aged employees. As Svensson (2001) in his research emphasized the need of ethical considerations in the selection of appropriate rating scales in questionnaires and in the choice of statistical methods utilized in the evaluation of scale assessments. Even more, according to the author, it is crucial to use an appropriate scale for data collection and if not it will tend to mislead the results in the analyzing phase. In this study, a three-scale questionnaire was used, as according to Tarhini (2015) a three-scale questionnaire is more appropriate for a homogeneous sample.

The aim of this research study, as noted earlier, is to investigate the perceptions towards engaging aged employees in public sector organizations. Further, this study comprises four distinct objectives and all of them were given an equal importance during the research work. Data collection techniques and procedures followed to achieve intended objectives can be illustrated as follows.

Objective 1	Identify the current employment status of aged employees in public sector organizations..
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In order to attain this objective, a qualitative approach as well as quantitative approach has been adopted. Data was collected from 81 public sector organization in Hambantota District to identify number of aged employees working under each organizations. Further, to determine the role, position and job description of those employees semi structured interviews were conducted.

Objective 2	Evaluate managerial perception, in terms of positive, negative and strategic insights on engaging aged employees in public sector organizations.
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In order to achieve this objective, a qualitative approach has been adopted wherein a Questionnaire follow by a semi structured interview with 40 experienced public sector officers who perform a managerial role. Additionally, insights regarding the current practice of recruiting aged employees obtained in initial phase was also considered and available literature was utilized as a guideline to this interview.

Objective 3	Examine perception of aged employees on the decisions to retire or retain in work organization
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To achieve this objective 24 retired public sector employees as well as employees who are intended to retire in near future were surveyed through a questionnaire. Questionnaire was prepared with available literature and with inputs of respondents of previous phase.

Objective 4	Suggest policy and practice recommendations for government, employers and other stakeholder groups on engaging aged employees in organizations
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This objective was obtained through analyzing the data collected from previous phases. Further, loopholes and effectiveness of available policies and practices was also discussed referring to available literature.

### 3.8.2 Research Population and Sampling method of this study

It has been widely acknowledged sample population as a group of subjects identified from a larger population as a representation of the entire group. However, as stated by Creswell and Clark (2007) the sampling method adopted facilitates safe generalizations of research finding. Utilization of effective sampling methods related to research study makes sure that there are practicable opportunities for recognizing a uniform, representative sub set of the population. Bryman and Bell (2015) identify two primary means for the selection of the research population as probability sampling and non-probability sampling.

The current study adopts different sampling approaches at different phases of the study. A mix of judgmental sampling, systematic random sampling and Snowball sampling has been adopted in the current study to achieve the research objectives.

### 3.9 Data Analysis

After data collection, the qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed separately. As illustrated in literature there are several procedures and methods to analyses qualitative data. Some authors identify the importance of quantifying the qualitative data and as a result can obtain a meaningful result which can be described more effectively than qualitative data. Data gathered from questionnaires with the rating scale was analyzed by quantifying the data. According to Krippendorff (2004), when data is quantified, tend to visualize qualitative data in a way that makes it convenient to conduct analysis using descriptive statistics to produce the findings. To analyze quantitative data descriptive statistics was utilized.

Further According to King and Brookes (2018), **thematic analysis** is also widespread method among researches to analyzing qualitative data. In this method the researcher identified common themes within the data by referring it for longer and sort the data accordingly into those identified themes. After the collected data is arranged followed by the selected themes and that enables a structured approach to data interpretation. According to Miles and Huberman (2014), this technique tend to be fairly flexible and as a result, appropriate for most research questions. Data collected through the Semi structured interview with managers as well as aged employees were analyzed through this **thematic analysis in this dissertation**. This leads a systematic organization of the whole data set and offed a firm platform for evaluation of large number of comments

from respondents and identification of patterns within them. Further, this method assist to provide an overall picture of the experiences of every respondent in relation to a particular question.

In addition, diagrams were also utilized in this study to analyze data collected from the survey as well as the questionnaire. It is an attractive and impressive way to explain certain facts or phenomena and also tend to reveals hidden relationships among data.

### **3.10 Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented the detailed methodology adapted in this study to achieve the aim. Effectiveness of data collection methods and data analysis methods are also presented in this chapter.

## CHAPTER 4

### 4.0 DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

#### 4.1 Introduction

Chapter three of this report presented the research methodology utilized in this study. The aim of this chapter is to explicate research findings of this investigation. This chapter explains and analyses the collected data in a detail manner. This study consist with two parts namely preliminary study and detail survey. Detail survey was conducted through questionnaire and important insights for preparation of questionnaire was collected through literature as well as semi structured interviews. Preliminary survey was conducted to evaluate the current trend in public sector on extending the retirement age or re recruiting and then detailed survey was conducted in two separate segments to evaluate the managers' perspectives regarding characteristics of aged employees and the perception of aged employees on extending or recruiting them in public sector. Data collected from preliminary survey illustrated in section 4.1 and Data collected from detailed survey from managerial level employees presented in section 4.2. Subsequently data collected from aged employees were reported in section 4.3 of this chapter.

#### 4.2 Preliminary study

As the initial stage of this study, preliminary survey was conducted among 81 public sector organizations in Hambantota district. As justified in the literature in this study Hambantota district was selected to do the case study. Current behavior of public sector organizations on extending the working life of aged employees or re-recruiting the aged employees was evaluated in this stage. Data was collected on number of employees who currently working under public sector who is above 60 years and data regarding their role, Nature of employment was collected.

##### 4.2.1 Current trend in public sector on extending the working life of age employees

Preliminary survey results reveal that there is a very less tendency of hiring aged employees to public sector, even though the government has taken action to expand the workability of aged people. Among those 81 public sector organizations only 5 organizations have employed employees over 60 years, which means that only 6 % of

public sector organizations in Hambantota district consider to hire aged employees. Further, all those 5 organizations are Pradeshita Sabas and there were totally 15 employees. Among those 10 employees are recruited in labourer grade positions and there were 2 secretariat positions filled with employees who are more than 60 years. Other 3 positions were hold by the chairpersons of pradeshiya sabas. Role of employees as well as the nature of employment is presented in Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2 respectively.

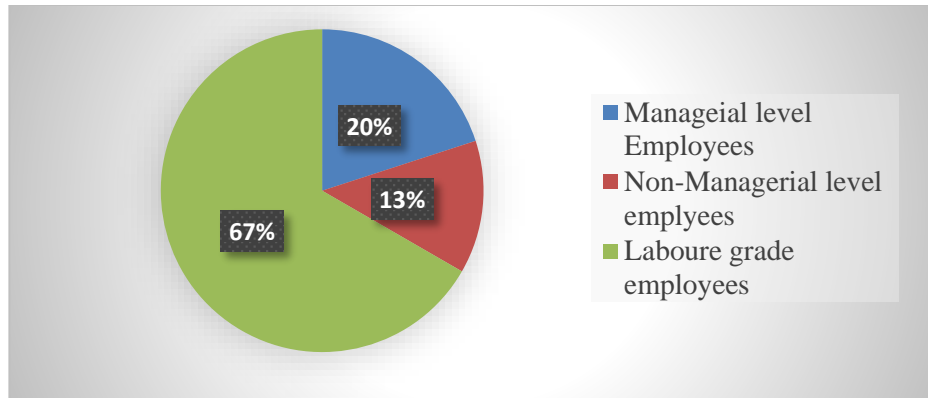


Figure 4. 1 Role of aged employees

According to Figure 4.1, it is evident that majority of employees in public sector employees aged 60 years and above are engaged in labour grade jobs. Further, all those workers are employed in casual basis and basically engaged in road maintenances and compost yards. All the managerial level positions held by the chairpersons of Pradeshiya sabas as there is no age barrier to enter into politics in Sri Lanka. Surprisingly, there was no professionals who are above 60 years engaged in work after their retirement age. However, all the non-managerial posts in this survey were held by Secretaries in pradeshiya sabas.

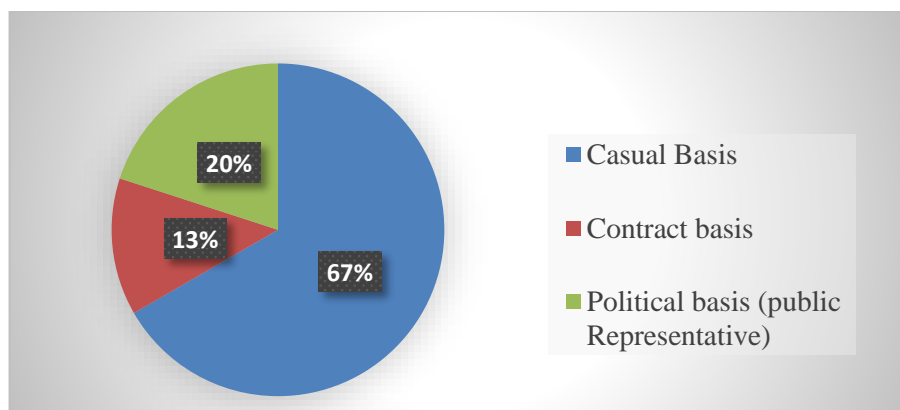


Figure 4. 2 Nature of employment in public sector employees above 60 years

According to the results of preliminary survey it is obvious that the relaxation of labour rules regarding the mandatory retirement age in Sri Lanka has not yet addressed the real issue of skill shortage in the labour market due to population aging as none of professionals tend to continue working after retirement age in the study area. Further, one of respondents from Pradeshia saba admitted even though the labour laws are relaxed the approval process of this extension is fully influenced by the political system in Sri Lanka as it requires a cabinet approval from the provincial council when it is required for an employee who is working under Provincial council. However, this statement can be justified by close evaluation in the pattern of engaging the aged employees in Hambantota district. All the employees who worked beyond 60 years are from Pradeshia sabas and it is the smallest political institute in Sri Lanka. Consequently, it is reasonable to state that ability of re-employment of aged public sector employees heavily depends on political influences.

#### 4.3 Detailed Survey -Phase 1: Perception of Managerial level employees

As illustrated in chapter 3, this study consist of detail investigation of perception on managerial level employees on engaging aged employees was evaluated. This phase consist of three segments. As the initial segment the awareness on managerial level employees regarding the issue of population aging was investigated. Characteristics of aged employees were then identified through questionnaire survey. Finally, costs benefits and strategical insights from managerial level employees were collected which can be utilized to present policy recommendations. As stated in chapter 3 data was collected from 40 randomly selected managerial level employees who have more than 7 years' experience in public sector. Details regarding the experience of respondents are summarized in Table 4.1 and graphically presented in Figure 4.3. Further, the details of respondents such as designations and representing organizations are tabulated in Annexure 1.

Table 4. 1 Details of experience of respondents

<b>Experience in years</b>	<b>No of Respondents</b>	<b>% From Total</b>
< 10	2	5.0
10-15 years	23	57.5
16-20 years	9	22.5
More than 20 years	6	15.0
<b>Total</b>	40	100.0

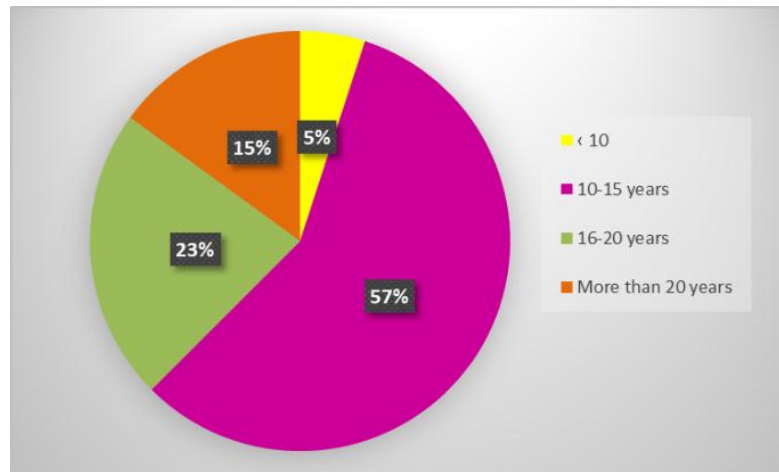


Figure 4. 3 Details of Experience in public sector of respondents

From Figure 4.3, it is evident that 95% of employees selected for detail survey have more than seven years' experience in public sector. Since they have considerably high experience in public sector their inputs can be regarded as a greater value.

#### 4.3.1 Evaluate the awareness on the issue of population aging

As the initial segment of the detail investigation the awareness among managerial level public sector employees regarding the issue of population aging in Sri Lanka was investigated. Their awareness regarding this issue is important as they directly involved in the recruitment process to the government sector. Selected sample of managers have more than seven years' experience in government sector and majority of them worked as members of Interview boards in recruiting. Surprisingly, majority of them about 60% not aware of this issue. It is apparent from the pie chat presented in Figure 4.4 which is developed through analyzing the collected data.

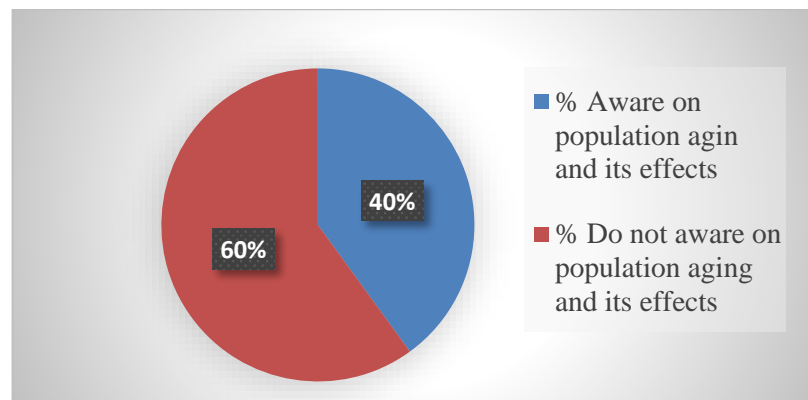


Figure 4. 4 Managers' awareness on population aging as an issue in Sri Lanka



### 4.3.2 Characteristics of aged employees according to Managers' perspective

The second segment of the detailed survey focused on investigate the participants' perceptions towards the engaging aged employees within organizations. Data was collected through questionnaire and Questionaries' were prepared by referring to the literature as well as from preliminary interviews with Managerial level employees in public sector. 28 prominent characteristics were identified and those characteristics were evaluated against Mangers' perceptions.

Afterwards, these characteristics of aged worker were categorized broadly in to two such as positive characteristics and negative characteristics or shortcomings of aged employees as shown in Table 4.2 and Table 4.3 respectively. Positive characteristics tend to reinforce the value of aged employee and negative characteristics diminish the value of aged employee.

Table 4. 2 Positive characteristics of aged employees

No	Description	% Agreed	% Neutral	% Disagreed
1	Experienced	95	0	5
2	Wide communication network with personal and professional relationships	90	0	10
3	Fewer conflicts within the organization	80	0	20
4	Willing to conduct jobs which are more feasible jobs to society	80	5	15
5	Knowledgeable (have more tacit knowledge)	75	5	20
6	Adaptable	75	5	20
7	Willing to help coworkers	75	5	20
8	Ability to develop more lasting relationships with other people	65	0	35
9	Mature decision making	60	15	25
10	Commitment to work	60	5	35
11	Ability to take risks	50	5	45
12	Hardworking	45	5	50
13	Ability to Sustain with in the modern industry	25	40	35
14	Capable of learn new skills easily	5	0	95
15	Flexible	5	10	85

It is revealed from the questionnaire that most important perceived positive characteristics of aged employees according to Managers perception. More than 70% of respondents agree that aged employees have following positive characteristics.

- Experienced
- Wide communication network with personal and professional relationships
- Fewer conflicts within the organization
- Willing to conduct jobs which are more feasible jobs to society
- Knowledgeable (have more tacit knowledge)
- Adaptable
- Willing to help coworkers

Many of the cited positive characteristics of aged workers are related to character strength of aged workers which gained through the experience they have gained through being in the society while other positive characteristics relate more to the traits of aged workers. It is clear from this data that aged workers are perceived to be more occupationally stable and have ability to produce quality work and seems to be loyal to their organizations as well as to the society. The above benefits of aged workers will ultimately lead not only to organizational success but also growth of the society. Comparing the findings of similar researches in literature it is evident according to Barth, Michael, William & Philip (1993) as well as Corna (2018) aged employees are Experienced, Knowledgeable and concluded that aged employees as a reliable source of employees to the organization. Similar study by Chiu, Snape & Redman (2001) reveal that aged works have a higher capability to have long-lasting social relationships and hence exhibit less conflicts with organizations. Therefore, it can be concluded that the results of the present study are strongly supported and consistent with the findings of previous studies. However, study reveals that aged employees are not flexible and less tendency to learn new skills.

Negative characteristics of aged employees are summarized in Table 4.2

Table 4. 3 Negative characteristics of aged employees

No	Description	% Agreed	% Neutral	%Disagreed
1	Less physical ability to perform tasks requiring greater physical effort	100	0	0
2	Technophobic (fear or dislike of new technology)	95	0	5
3	Narrow minded	85	5	10
4	Not interested in learning new skills	85	0	15
5	Bossy	85	5	10
6	Less productive	60	10	30
7	Selfish	50	5	45
8	Untrainable	45	5	50
9	Less willing to take responsibilities at work	45	15	40
10	Prefer less challenging jobs	40	15	45
11	Increase in absenteeism/sick leave	30	20	50
12	Workers are less willing to make sacrifices on behalf of the organization	30	35	35
13	Do not want jobs with increased responsibilities	15	5	80

It is understood that the most important perceived negative characteristics behind the employment of aged workers according to managers' perception were as follows

- Less physical ability to perform tasks requiring greater physical effort
- Technophobic (fear or dislike of new technology)
- Narrow minded
- Not interested in learning new skills
- Bossy

It is clear that majority of public sector managers stereotyped aged workers as less physical ability, reluctant learn new skills, Narrow minded and hard to adapt to new technology. These stereotype perceptions tend to discourage the employment of aged workers. However, it is evident through the fact that the perceived positive characteristics (cited above) of aged workers tend to outweigh the negative characteristics perceived by public sector firms in Hambantota district. Moreover,

This indicates that managers in public sector are satisfied with the performance of aged employees . When comparing the findings of this study with other similar studies negative characteristics of aged workers in public sector gain compatible results as according to Peterson (2000), Brooke and Taylor in (2004), Hayward, Taylor, Smith and Davies (1997) investigated that aged employees has physical limitations, less adaptable to technology, inflexible, Narrow minded, resistance to change. Further, there is a common stereotype among managers according to literature that aged employees do not prefer work assignments with increased obligations. However, this study reveal that only 15% public sector managers agree on that view and 80% disagree with that view. This imply that Managers' stereotype on aged employees has changed now than in previous studies and managers are realizing the full potential of aged employees. As 59 % managers on average agreed to positive characteristics of aged workers and only 41% agreed on negative characteristics implies that it is advantageous for public sector organizations to hire aged employees.

In addition, in literature to analyses the characteristics of aged worker in more precise manner, categorized those in to themes such as Organization-based Characteristics, Task-based Characteristics, People-Based Characteristics. Consequently, in this study, positive characteristics and negative characteristics of aged workers are categorized separately under those themes and presented in Table 4.4 and Table 4.5. This will present a firm platform for comparison of each characteristics under those themes. According to literature organizational based characteristics intensify individual's attachment with its organization (Cooper & Robertson, 1998) and motivate the smooth run of organization toward the organizational goals. These characteristics assist employees psychologically ties with an organization and align their goals and values with the organizational goals and values. Task based characteristics enhance efficient and quality output as well as people base characteristics represent harmonic deployment with people within and outside the organization without conflicts.

Table 4. 4 Positive Characteristics of aged employee under specified themes

No	Description	% Agree	% Neutral	%Disagree
<b>Organization related Characteristics</b>				
1	Fewer conflicts within the organization	80	0	20
2	Perform jobs more feasible to the society	80	5	15
3	Adaptable	75	5	20
4	Mature decision making	60	15	25
5	Commitment to work	60	5	35
6	Ability to Sustain with in the modern industry	25	40	35
<b>People related Characteristics</b>				
7	Wide communication network with personal and professional relationships	90	0	10
8	Willing to help coworkers	75	5	20
9	Develop long lasting relationships with others	65	0	35
<b>Task related Characteristics</b>				
10	Experienced	95	0	5
11	Knowledgeable	75	5	20
12	Ability to take risks	50	5	45
13	Hardworking	45	5	50
14	Capable of learn new skills as easily	5	0	95
15	Flexible	5	10	85

Table 4. 5 Negative Characteristics of aged employee under specified themes

No	Description	% Agreed	% Neutral	% Disagreed
<b>Organization related Characteristics</b>				
25	Less willing to take responsibilities at work	45	15	40
20	Prefer less challenging jobs	40	15	45
24	Increase in absenteeism/sick leave	30	20	50
26	Less likely to do sacrifices on behalf of the organization	30	35	35
19	Do not want jobs with increased responsibilities	15	5	80
<b>People Related Characteristics</b>				
22	Bossy	85	5	10
21	Selfish	50	5	45
<b>Task Related Characteristics</b>				
28	Less physical ability to perform tasks requiring greater physical effort	100	0	0
16	Technophobic (fear or dislike of new technology)	95	0	5
17	Narrow minded	85	5	10
18	Not interested in learning new skills	85	0	15
27	Less productive	60	10	30
23	Untrainable	45	5	50

According to managers perception aged employees have more task related negative characteristics while very less organizational related negative characteristics. In addition, they have more people related positive characteristics. It is worth to compare the positive and negative characteristics of aged worker under each theme to identify their net effect to the performance of aged worker in the work place. Bar charts obtained through analyzing the collected data is presented in Figure 4.5 to enhance the visual illustration of data.

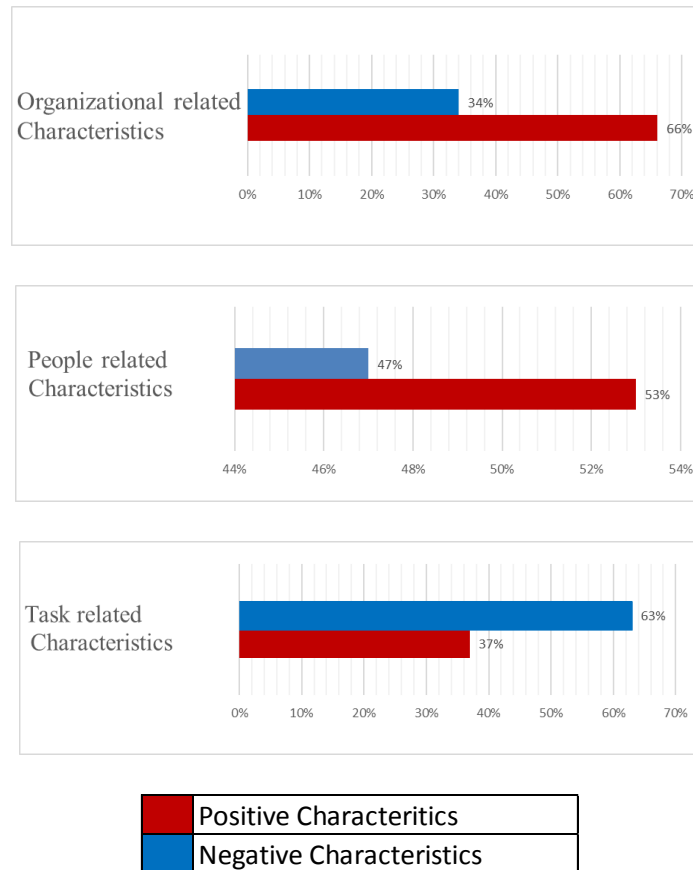


Figure 4. 5 Comparison of positive and negative characteristics of aged employees under specified themes

According to Figure 4.5 aged employees have less organizational based negative characteristics. That means aged worker has effective commitment towards organizations and shows high level of emotional attachment with the organization. These characteristics improve performance as well as involvement if individuals to achieve organizational goals and thus result organizational effectiveness. Further, this strong relationship with organization will exhibit less absenteeism rate and it is evident from the collected data as only 30% of managers' agreed that aged employees has increase in absenteeism/sick leaves. Further, according to Figure 4.5, aged people have considerably high amount of task based negative characteristics. However, aged people have more positive characteristics related to people. Hodson (1997) argues that social relations in work environment can play an important role to improve job satisfaction, performance and wellbeing of individual. Hence, it can be concluded that aged workers have higher job satisfaction and it will be beneficial for organizations to retain aged employees.

However, when comparing the Task based positive and negative characteristics of aged employees. They tend to have more negative characteristics and basic reason for this might be the common stereotypes among managers within organizations which tend to demotivate the aged employee and ultimately output of the task affected.

### 4.3.3 Strategic insights by managerial level employees on engaging aged workers in public sector organizations

As the final segment of detail survey in the phase 1 of this study the impact due to specified characteristics of aged employees to the public sector organizations further evaluated with a questionnaire and presented in Table 4.6. The insights of managers were categorized under following 3 themes to open up a path for further analyzing.

Table 4. 6 Perception on engaging aged workers to public sector organizations

No	Description	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
1	After the typical retirement age aged workers could continue working for the organization as services providers such as consultants	83%	0%	17%
2	There are several obstacles to retirees continuing in the organization	80%	0%	20%
3	The jobs of aged employees, after the typical retirement age, could be more flexible (e.g. longer vacation; shorter working hours, part-time schedules)	75%	2%	23%
4	When Recruitment or selection for jobs younger workers are more preferred than aged workers	70%	5%	25%
5	Will be beneficial to the organization as exit of aged worker implies loss of (tacit and explicit) knowledge to the organization	88%	0%	12%
6	More committed to work because they no longer had so many family duties	83%	12%	5%
7	The characteristics of the majority of aged workers are significantly valuable to organizations	80%	5%	15%
8	The integration of aged workers in organizations will result in conflicts with their younger counterparts	83%	0%	17%
9	It would be beneficial for workers themselves than it is beneficial to organizations and society	63%	0%	37%
10	Less valuable to today's organizations because they are poorly skilled in new technologies	32%	30%	38%
11	Organizations do not have benefits in investing in aged workers	30%	5%	65%
12	Higher costs for the organization	4%	58%	38%



According to data it is prominent that majority of managers (about 80%) agreed that aged worker needs specific flexible job design. Further, conferring to the attitude of managers' deployment of aged employees as consultants or service providers will tend to be more effective as it will minimize tensions among workplaces as aged workers have more positive characteristics related to organizations as well as people as presented in the previous section. Similarly, aged employees acquired sufficient experience to justify their roles which enable them to work to a satisfactory standard which has a considerable benefit for organizations. However, it is evident from this results that there are several obstacles to recruit aged employees to organizations. Specifically, majority of managers commented on the political influences which hinder the recruitment of employees who can give a real service to public sector. Policy makers should give attention to this issue if they really need to deploy aged employees to public sector.

From the results in Table 4.4 can be stated that organizations have more benefits than costs in recruiting aged people. More than 70% of managers agreed that aged workers are beneficial to organizations and characteristics of aged employees are worth for effective run of organizations as well as they are more committed to work. Even though in literature it is a common argument that aged workers induce high cost to the organization only 4% of the sample agreed on that view. Further, majority of managers disagree with the view that aged employees are less valuable to today's organizations because they are poorly skilled in new technologies. As many of them stated that this statement is not vailed for public sector as the public sector is still lagging behind when comparing the technological advancement with other private sector organizations. As a result, even though the aged employees cannot cope with technological advancement it will not have a negative impact to recruit aged employees in public sector.

However, more than 80% of managers agreed that employing aged employees will tend to propagate work place tensions among younger employees. Yet, this can handle by proper management strategies.

#### **4.3.4 Insights of managerial level employees on engaging aged employees**

Through semi structured interviews conducted with Managerial level employees in public sector who has more than 7year experience presented valuable insights on engaging aged employees. One Respondent (R9) who has more than 15 years'

Executive grade experience within public sector stated that *“I’m not biased against aged people, but in public sector there are several jobs which require high physical capacity which are not suitable for aged people. Unfortunately, majority of labour grade jobs filled by aged people as chairpersons in Pradeshiya sabas has authority to recruit those grades only. Further according to my view, stressful jobs will also not suitable for aged employees. In contrast, I don’t mind hiring an aged person as a person to handle accounts or to do documentary management (Management Assistant) in administration division as this jobs involve more repetitive activities and the experience in the field will be worth to the organization”*.

According to this statement, it is evident that there is no effective way of engaging employments for public sector and they are recruiting without a plan to address the real issue of skill shortage. Further, as the aged workers are employed in inappropriate positions it will tend to encourage negative stereotypes on aged employees rather positive. Further, this statement also emphasize that aged workers are more effective in repetitive work and this statement implies that aged workers require unique job designs. In addition, this argument further reinforced by following response from one of representative (R3) in the construction industry.

*“Job characteristics in the construction industry aren’t conducive to employment of aged people as labours. It is essential to be fit and have enough stamina to work for ten hours on feet, under rough conditions in construction sites. However, I’m not against employing aged people, including retirees, as construction-site Forman. In such situation it is more important is the experience which was gained previously”*.

One of managerial level employee in Divisional secretariat (R15) in Angunukolapalasa stated that *“There are about 10 employees in Angunukolapalassa Divisional secretariat who are above 55 years and 3 of them retire in this year. Many of those work as “Grama Niladhari”. I hope extending working period after retirement of a person who engage in work with the community is more important. Because dealing with public issues is an art rather a science. Since aged people have more social capacity than younger people, they can handle problems evolve in society in keener manner with their experience as they have effective communication skills to address the audience of any level. There are very less conflicts of aged Grama*

*Niladhari than young ones. Actually, it is worth to extend their working life*". This statement implies that aged people are better in dealing with people as they tend to build a reliable relationship with them than younger employees. This statement also underpins the social capacity of aged employees.

In addition, respondent (R37) represented pradeshiya saba also reinforce the same view by stating *"I think it is essential to extend the working life of aged people as when dealing with public, Sri Lankan culture tend to give a recognition to age and general public feel Aged people as a more reliable source of information than younger ones. For example, when instructing regarding building regulations by a mature Technical officer, clients are more likely to follow those with minimum conflicts. As a result, I feel maturity is a privilege in public sector to perform duties which involve more interactions with people"*.

Consequently, other respondent (R16) distinguished engaging aged employees as an effective solution for skill labour shortage in Sri Lanka and stressed that organizational culture in public sector perfectly match with aged employees rather youngers. His statement as follows

*"Extending working life of aged people will be a good solution to cope with current issues of skilled labour. According to my experience aged workers tend to have less leaves than young workers. This may because they have less commitments in life. Further, the health condition or physical fitness of aged employees are in a substantial condition to perform activities in public sector. However, I observed that many aged workers are resistance to change or adopt new technology, yet this will not be a problem for public sector as many public sector organizations in Sri Lanka lagging behind in adopting new technology. Further, majority of rules and regulations in public sector were not changed in previous few decades as a result, utilizing aged workers in public sector will not be a problem. In the other hand I feel younger workers who has a grate working capacity should not remain their lives in public sector. They should try private sector opportunities, those will open up opportunity in their lives to expose to new technology and also to cope with challengers"*.

Many managers in this study emphasized that there is urged need in alterations work methods and supervisory techniques to gain the required output from aged employees

than younger employees as task related characteristics of aged employees are varying with younger's. Aged workers are motivated by the authority and they may require less close supervision. Also, since aged workers tend to respect authority, have mature behavior and are loyal to the organization as well as for their duty ,Ultimately the close supervision on the aged employees might be unnecessary and may be a demotivating factor for their performance. Moreover, they stressed a need of training and development programs which focus on aged employees as the training needs and learning patterns of aged employees and younger employees have considerable variation.

In this study attitude of managers regarding age discrimination in public sector is also evaluated. One of respondent (R36) expressed his view on age discrimination in public sector as *“I don't think that there is age discrimination in public sector organizations. However, if somebody been around with a particular view for a long time and unwilling to change his view just because he dealt with that view for a long time, that person may be rejected from the society as he is not fit to the system. Obviously, this will true for any person regardless with the age. In other hand, in public sector almost all promotional scheme experience in public sector has considered as a top priority. Aged employees have more experience and have higher tendency to achieve promotions. As a result, it is not precise to admit that there is age discrimination in public sector”*.

This part of study examines the characteristics of aged employees according to managers' perceptions. It is conscientious to conclude that engaging aged employees to public sector is very convenient basically the tasks involved in public sector as well as the work environment best fit for aged employees. Further, this investigation distinguished potential loop holes in current practices and procedures of enrolling aged people to public sector.

#### 4.3.5 The policy context of managing employees' ages in organizations

As the labour force ages, policy makers are paying increasing attention to the situation of older workers in national labour markets. According to this study many suggested that the experiences of aged workers are difficult or impossible to subsidize. However, to promote the better deployment of younger and aged individuals in organizations there is a need for policy makers, employers as well as employees themselves to be attentive to workplace practices, which tend to enhance the age-group relationships. To face the issue of skill shortage in the labour market due to population aging organizations cannot be able to ignore these age dynamics, but should adopt 'age aware' rather than 'age free' practices.

Even though the policy makers in Sri Lanka is also suggested and implemented the increasing the mandatory retirement age it still lagging behind to address the real issue of skill shortage as this study found that none of professionals working life was not extended. However, according to managers' perspective it is visible that the extending the retirement age of public sector employees' viable decision to address the issue of population aging. Attitudes and assumptions held by senior and middle managers towards aged employees also represent the organizational based attitude towards aged employees and those have a considerable impact on the policies and practices implemented within organizations.

Majority of public sector managers' stresses urged need of human resource management strategy in public sector which is align with the need of aged people to retain aged employees within organizations and well as to amplify their performance. This organization management strategy should not embellish existing negative stereotypes and doubts about the commitment of older workers' and should tend to motivate aged employees. According to Walker (1999), in his report introduce the term 'age management' which deal with effective management of human resources with different age groups within organizations, but more generally also to the overall management of an ageing workforce. According to this study about 75% of Managers agrees that aged employees need a specific job design, which allow part time working and long vacations with flexible working hours than younger employees. As this study reveal that aged workers have a positive characteristic which is willing to help coworkers, as a result the integration of aged and younger will give an opportunity for younger ones to learn through the experience of aged people.

Further, Managerial level professionals agree with the argument that it is worth to invest on training of aged employees as training is an important segment in personal development as well as professional development of aged employees. However, they admitted that many public sector organizations do not have adequate consideration on adjusting training programmes which perfectly match with requirement of aged employees and as a result they have stereotypes they are untrainable. Ultimately, it is important to accommodate training programs which specifically design for aged employees if it is required to enrich the performance of aged people. In addition, it is important to provide knowledge for managerial level employees to maintain age awareness within organizations, which tend to promote comfortable working culture with less disputes and managers will be able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of aged employees effectively and can assign duties accordingly.

#### **4.4 Detailed Survey - Phase 2: Perception of aged employees on retirement and retain on work**

As the second phase of detailed investigation data was collected from aged employees to investigate the potential influences of aged employees to retain on work. This phase also consist two segments and potential influences on aged employees' decisions to retire or retain in work was examined through a questionnaire related to their retirement experience. As the second phase their satisfaction about current mandatory retirement age as well as their perception on becoming old was investigated. This phase tend to trigger sense of fullness to this study as even though it is beneficial to recruit aged employees the potential influences which tend to retain decision according to aged employees perception have significant importance to implementation of above action. 24 employees who retired recently or willing to retire during next two years were randomly selected to conduct detail investigation. Comprehensive details aged employees are presented in Annexure 2 and the experience details of selected respondents are summarized in Table 4.7 and Figure 4.6.

Table 4. 7 Experience details of respondent aged employees

<b>Experience in years</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>
20 to 30	13
30to 35	8
35 to 40	3

More than 40	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>

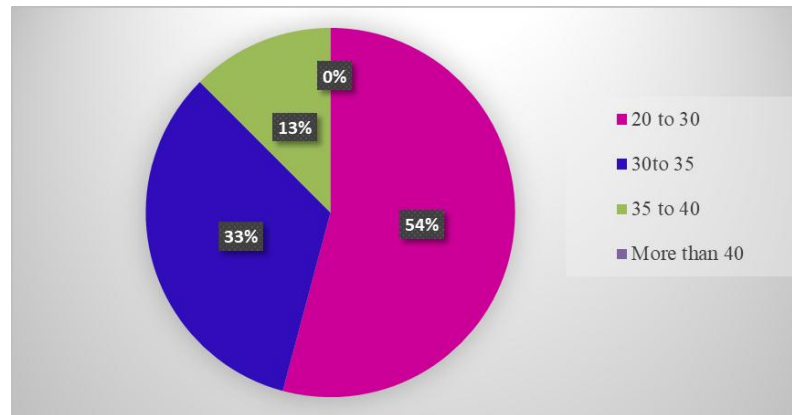


Figure 4. 6 Experience of respondents of aged employees

#### 4.4.1 Perception of Aged employee on retirement and engage in work

In this phase factors which influences on aged employees' decisions to continue working or retain in work was examined through a questionnaire related to their retirement experience. In addition, the work related attitudes of aged employees were also evaluated. Preliminary discussions were conducted to have a guideline to prepare the questionnaire as there were limited insights in literature which related to this part of research problem. To investigate the potential influencing factors of aged employees to retain on work questionnaire was prepared to identify their attitude towards retirement experience. Then those attitudes were converted to identify which factors influence them to retain in work. Rather than direct asking the consent of aged employees regarding these factors this can be a better method to acquire realistic attitudes overcoming the "observer's paradox". Further, these attitudes were further deduced under four themes as follows to analyses the factors in more detailed manner.

- Psychological concerns related to retirement
- Financial concerns related with retirement
- Health concerns related with retirement
- Social Concerns related with retirement

Attitudes of aged employees regarding retirement experience is tabulated in Table 4.8 under above specified themes.

Table 4. 8 Aged employees' attitude on retirement experience

No	Description of the attitude	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
<b>Psychological concerns related to retirement</b>				
1	My job has always been a source of my identity.	83%	0%	17%
2	Retirement is a difficult adjustment	87%	4%	9%
3	My family does not want me after I retire	43%	13%	43%
4	I will lose/lost the recognition in the society when I retire	74%	9%	17%
5	Retirement causes people to age more rapidly	78%	0%	22%
<b>Financial concerns rerate with retirement</b>				
6	I am afraid I will/am a burden on my family as a retired person	4%	0%	96%
7	I'm worried that my retirement income will not sufficient to fulfill my needs	30%	22%	48%
<b>Health concerns rerated with retirement</b>				
8	Retirement causes people to suffer from mental problems	52%	30%	17%
9	Retirement causes people to get sick	78%	9%	13%
10	Retirement leads to premature death	65%	9%	26%
<b>Social Concerns rerated with retirement</b>				
11	Retirement will not bother me because I am sure I can make new friends no matter where I go	30%	30%	39%
12	Retirement will allow me to do things with friends that I was not able to do while I was working	39%	9%	52%
13	I will be socially neglected after retirement	83%	4%	13%
14	I will feel lonely after I retire	52%	4%	43%



It is encouraging to note that respondents have pessimistic view with regard to the prospect of retirement. For example, approximately 65 percent of respondents agreed that retirement would lead to premature death (Item 10). Furthermore, about 52 percent of respondents agreed that retirement causes people to suffer from mental problems (Item 8), while another 78 percent agreed that retirement causes people to get sick (Item 9). This reveal that majority of employees do not like to retire and they willing to work.

However, findings of this study also suggest that respondents are realistic about retirement, or rather, aging in general. For example, about 78 percent of respondents agreed that retirement causes people to age more rapidly (Item 5), while another 87 percent agreed that retirement is a difficult adjustment (Item 2). As concluded by [Skarborn and Nicki \(2000\)](#) individuals generally experience considerable nervousness when confronted with their retirement. It is reasonable to state that respondents in this study also aligned with previous conclusions. Additionally, many of these individuals expect that they remain healthy until they work and also complete termination of full-time work will tend to have health problems as well as physiological problems.

Furthermore, findings of this study hint that respondents were too worried about losing their friends and their ability to make new ones. Most of respondents were not agree with the statement that "Retirement will not bother me because I am sure I can make new friends no matter where I go" as they feel that they are able to make friends while they are working. Majority of respondents (83 percent) agreed that they will be socially neglected after retirement (Item 13). Another 43 percent disagreed that it will be hard to replace their friends from work (Item 15). In fact, approximately 78 percent of respondents agree that they will not have much in common within my co-workers anymore and about 52 percent of respondents agree that they will feel lonely after retirement. However, this apparent lack of confidence among aged employees in their ability to make new friends may account for why respondents are generally anxious over their retirement. Further, results of this study suggest that in general, respondents are much worried about loneliness followed by the retirement.

Finally, it is noteworthy that respondents generally expressed much confidence in their family's support following their retirement as well as their financial status after

retirement. For example, the majority of respondents which is about 96 percent disagreed that they worry that their families would not support them after they retire (Item 6) and also Item 3. These findings are encouraging the fact that the younger generations are increasingly more likely to shirk their responsibilities of taking care of the elderly. Reports in the media have highlighted cases whereby the elderly have been mistreated or even abandoned by their families as a consequence of their being a burden to the family. Thus, our findings suggest that respondents are in general rather confident about the willingness of their children' to caring them when they are aged. Further to identify the major motive of aged employees on retaining decision, their attitude on retirement decision further analyzed through a pie chart as in Figure 4.6. According to that it is evident that majority of aged employees are not motivated with financial benefits as they do not care about financial issues when considering the retirement decision. However, social concerns and psychological concerns are their major considerations. As a result, if it is vital to motivate aged employees by giving social recognition rather giving financial benefits if is required to encourage aged employees to retain in work.

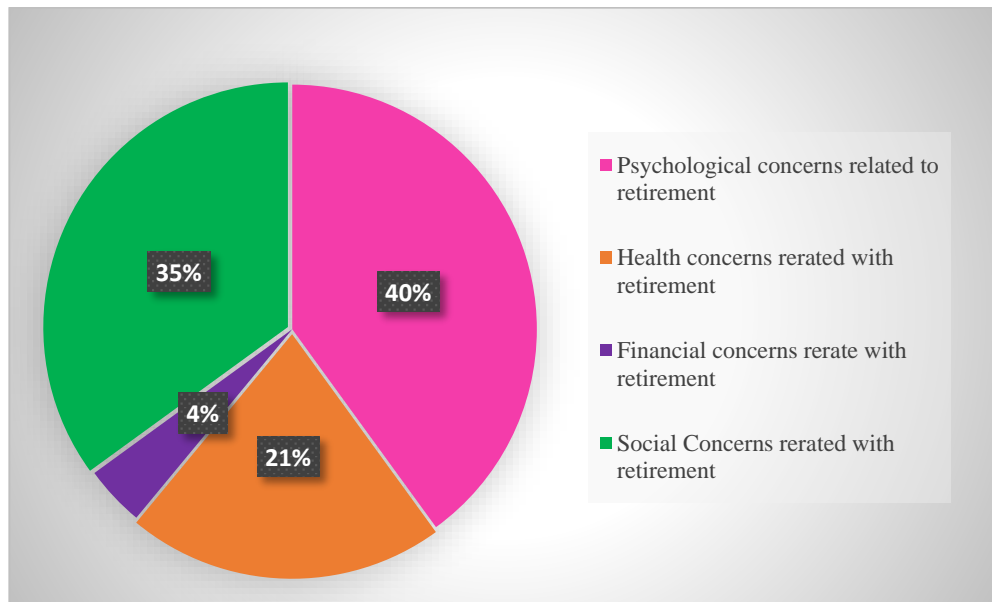


Figure 4. 7 Aged employees' attitude on retirement experience

#### **4.4.2 Attitude of aged employees on being “old” and about increasing the working life**

As the final segment of the detailed survey in this phase semi structured interviews were conducted among aged employees to investigate their view on engaging aged people in work after their retirement as well as their opinion on how old they should consider them to be “old”. Majority of respondents’ view extending working life as a positive contributor for the economy of the country than themselves. However, they stressed a need to have policies to encourage aged employees to work and they should have authority to decide when to retire rather to have a mandatory retirement age. In addition, aged employees admire the contribution of the employers for professional as well as personal development and the aged workers which make it easy for aged employees to cope with modern industry. Welfare to work policies should also be address the needs of aged employees in organizations.

Further, for the question raised regarding which age do they perceive people to be ‘old’? An aged participant (R’<sub>15</sub>) state his personal view on aging as *“When people start stopping, that’s when they start getting old.”* Further, another participant (R’<sub>11</sub>) stated that *“as people now live for far longer, it is not fare to categorize people as ‘old’ at a specific age often 60 years. This traditional view is now outdated as people of age more than 60 years’ also have more stamina and can work efficiently as younger”*. Another respondent (R’<sub>7</sub>) state that, *“view on old has changed over time, and it will need to continue changing in the future as people live longer healthier lives, someone who is 60 years old today, I would argue, is middle aged, whereas 200 years ago, a 60-year-old would be a very old person”*. It is worth to point out the view of another respondent that *“we receive a gift of time after mid of life due to miracles in medicine and technology. Yet, people themselves or even the society not willing to take advantage of this additional time as aged people are not open up for choices they have to select retirement after they are 60 years particularly in Sri Lanka. Employees should have an authority to select what is my next”*

In other hand, this study also tends to investigate the suggestions among aged employees on current policies and practices and regulations regarding engaging aged people to work. Majority of respondents are not happy with current mandatory

retirement age. As they think it should be extended to about 65 years and 56% of respondents agree with that suggestion.

#### **4.5 Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented the finding of this study in each phase. The study consisted with two basic surveys such as preliminary survey and detailed survey. Preliminary study evaluated the current practice in public sector regarding recruiting aged employees and it disclosed that the recruitment of aged employees is a process which have high political influence.

Detailed investigation was carried out in two phases and data was collected from managerial level employees as well as aged employees. This segment of study uncovered that Positive characteristics which are beneficial for organizations over weigh the negative characteristics of aged employees according to Managers' perception. Further, they stated that there is a need of specific job designs which suit the requirements of aged employees to have optimum output from them. Further, they stated that the organizational environment of public sector match with the needs of aged employees.

Second phase of detailed investigation was carried out to investigate the perception of aged employees to retain on work and also to evaluate their satisfaction regarding current mandatory retirement age. Study reveals that aged employees are more concern about psychological and social aspects rather than financial aspects. Further, majority of aged employees are not satisfied with the current mandatory retirement age in public sector and fond to have an increase to match the current trends of demographic structure of Sri Lanka.

## CHAPTER 5

### 5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

Chapter Four analyzed and synthesized the research findings based on the case study conducted among public sector organizations in the Hambanthota District, while this chapter summarizes the outcome of the research and provides recommendations for potential stakeholders to promote an age aware culture in public sector organizations. Further, Chapter Five summarizes the limitations of this study and provide recommendations for future research in this particular area.

#### 5.2 Summary of the background and the research procedure

This study aimed to investigate the perceptions of engaging aged employees in public sector organizations. This will tend to promote an “age aware” culture in organizations rather “age free” practices, as aged employees are a more significant segment in the labour force. Four objectives were formulated to realize this aim and to attain these objectives, and a comprehensive literature review performed is presented in Chapter Two of this study.

As depicted in literature, population aging is a global issue. Even though a majority of developed countries actively address this issue, developing countries such as Sri Lanka are still lagging in finding alternatives to face this problem. However, this rapid increase in the aged population will affect various sectors of the society, positively or negatively. Even though the developed countries primarily address the critical challenge of population aging with the negative impact of economic growth, the issues of the aging population are more complex in developing countries such as Sri Lanka, as it is compounded with many economic and social factors (Bandara, 2017). Further, population aging negatively influences the labour market and tend to pose a skill shortage due to the retirement of experienced and skilled labour from the labour force. Therefore, there is a need for altering the mandatory retirement age in the public sector. However, the attitudes on management regarding engaging aged employees and the aged employees’ perception towards working should be investigated before suggesting viable concepts and actions. As a result, this study aimed to examine the attitude toward recruiting aged employees in public sector organizations. In the process of achieving the research aim, the deduced objectives are achieved in sections.

**5.2.1 Objective 1 - - Identify the current employment status of aged employees in public sector organizations**

In the process of achieving the first and the principal objective of this study, current behavior and practices of public sector organizations in Hambanthota district was investigated as the preliminary study. Data were collected from 81 public sector organizations. As per the results, there was no profession in the public sector to work after the mandatory retirement age, and the politics entirely influenced the recruitment process. The study revealed that the current practice of relaxation of compulsory retirement age was unsuccessful in addressing the real issue of skill shortage in the industry.

In addition, results of the detailed investigation conducted through randomly-selected managerial level public sector employees revealed a majority (60%) are not aware of the issue of population aging in Sri Lanka. However, this situation can also consider as a driver behind the loopholes in the recruitment process of aged employees, other than political influences. Since managerial-level public sector employees are actively involved in the current recruitment process of the public sector, their awareness of the issue is vital to fill the gap in the labour market through aged employees. Even more, many managerial-level employees stressed the requirement of appropriate job design, which match the capabilities of aged employees, while mitigating their weaknesses to have optimum productivity from them. Even more, the current capacity of the political power to influence the recruitment of aged employees should be minimized with the preparation of recruitment policies and selection procedures, which determine the competence of prospective candidates to cater the current skill shortage in the labour market.

**5.2.2 Objective 2- Evaluate managerial perception, considering the positive, negative, and strategic insights on engaging aged employees in public sector organizations**

To achieve this objective, attitudes of management level employees regarding aged employees were collected through a questionnaire survey. Consequently, important insights from managerial level public sector employees who have more than seven year experience in public sector also collected. Data analysis revealed that positive characteristics of aged employees overweigh the negative characteristics. Prominent positive and negative characteristics of aged employees are summarized in Table 5.1.

Knowledge and experience of aged employees is beneficial for organizations and enhance stability in performance by shrinking errors in work.

Table 5. 1 Prominent characteristics of aged employees: (Managers' perspective)

POSITIVE CHARACTERISTICS	NEGATIVE CHARACTERISTICS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experienced</li> <li>• Have wider network of personal and professional relationship</li> <li>• Fewer conflicts within the organization</li> <li>• Wish to perform jobs more feasible jobs to society</li> <li>• Knowledgeable</li> <li>• Adaptable</li> <li>• Willing to help coworkers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less physical ability to perform tasks requiring greater physical effort</li> <li>• Technophobic</li> <li>• Narrow minded</li> <li>• Not interested in learning new skills</li> <li>• Bossy</li> </ul>

Further, their expanded communication network within the industry tend to enhance coordination within and outside the organization. Besides, they wish to perform more feasible jobs to society, as they tend to take greater advantage of available information by considering more problem facts and accessible data and evaluating them with their experience and knowledge. This study reveals that aged employees preferred to work with people, and they consider it is their responsibility to help coworkers as matured employees. Even more, aged employees have fewer conflicts with organizations as they are much familiar and committed to policies and practices within the organization. The organizational commitment may promote to engage in activities even if they see no personal benefit for their efforts.

As per this study, as managers' perception, the aged employees are more committed. Hence, it is reasonable to argue that aged workers are far less likely to practice 'job-hopping,' and their presence in organizations results in lower staff turnover. Further, aged employees have an emotional loyalty to the organization, which translates into their genuine desire to remain.

However, aged employees have prominent negative characteristics that make recruiting them disadvantageous. Aged employees performed more poorly with

modern technology, and hence, it is inconvenient to hire them in positions that require advanced technology to perform, and they should be allowed working in a conventional work environment, as they are less likely to be trained. Also, aged employees prefer to perform supervisory-level jobs, which, in modern organizations, will be challenging for aged employees due to their less knowledge of technology.

The physical capacity may start to decline in the middle age, although there is a considerable variation among individuals. According to Stones and Kozma (1985), physical ability or performance refers to the outcomes of coordinated activity among major components of the locomotor system carrying out work and body motion. However, a critical job analysis must determine the physical abilities necessary for a job to avoid selection procedures based on skills that may put aged workers in a disadvantageous situation.

### **5.2.3 Objective 3 - Examine the perception of aged employees on the decisions to retire or retain in work organization**

To achieve this objective data was collected through a questionnaire to investigate the aged workers' attitude regarding retirement experience. Data collected in this study reveal that majority of aged employees willing to continue working and aged employees are much more worried on discontinuation of social interaction rather than on financial problems, they might induce after retirement. Further, aged employees expect more recognition during working and they wish to retain on work if the organizational environment match with the requirements of aged.

In addition, aged employees stressed a need to have policies to encourage aged employees to work and they should have authority to decide when to retire rather to have a mandatory retirement age. Even more, study reveal the requirement of appropriate job design to match the circumstance of aged employees and that will promote optimum output from them. Further, there is a need of appropriate training which specifically designed to aged employees to upgrade their knowledge.

Aged employees prefer to measure their age through the experience they gain rather than the years they spent and as a result they considered themselves a greater asset for the economy of the country. Further, they have limited family commitments and



willing to work in their full capacity and prefer to earn pride through doing more feasible projects to society.

However, aged employee are not suitable to do jobs which require greater physical capacity as well as employments which require advance technology. Further, they are narrow minded and prefer the authority to instruct others.

**5.2.4 Objective 4 - Suggest policy and practice recommendations for government, employers and other stakeholder groups on engaging aged employees in organizations.**

The collected insights of aged employees and managerial-level public sector employees were critically evaluated to achieve this objective. A majority of respondents viewed public sector organizations as the best place to recruit aged employees due to its unique organizational culture. However, some respondents stressed the need for training and development programs, which specifically address the needs of aged employees, to derive their optimum output.

Anti-age discrimination legislation should be introduced to promote the employability of aged employees, based on individual's skills and abilities, and demote discrimination against a worker over 60-years on the basis of age, age-related stereotypes, or assumptions concerning abilities, physical status, or performance, for any employment decision. However, improving the employability of aged employees is not a single action, but the integration of several measures implemented, not only in the individual level but also within organizations under motivation government. The model illustrated in Figure 5.1 shows key attributes to enhance the employment of aged workers. Furthermore, job design for aged workers can be developed by considering the prominent characteristics of aged employees. Jobs that require more experience and interactions with people are preferable for aged people, and considering their advanced knowledge, careers such as consultants are also suitable. However, jobs dealing with advanced technology and demanding a higher physical capacity may be unfitting for aged people.

Despite the typical stereotypes, the implementation of new technology has often caused problems and challenges to the continuation of jobs for aged workers.

However, there is an essential need to upgrade the capabilities of aged employees to match new work demands or else match the existing skills with the available jobs. Conveniently addressing this is often left undeveloped, and have therefore caused the displacement of many workers over the age of 60 years from the labour market. It is often incorrectly argued that their competency is no longer sufficient and their experiences are less valid. In addition, the following are the essential points to consider to promote workability of aging workers.

- Training of managerial-level employees for age management and implementation of age ergonomics
- Arranging training opportunities designed explicitly to cater to the training and development needs of the aging workforce
- Promotion of workability is the same for all age groups by preventing age discrimination; hence, concentrate on job designs, which matches the aged employees' requirements

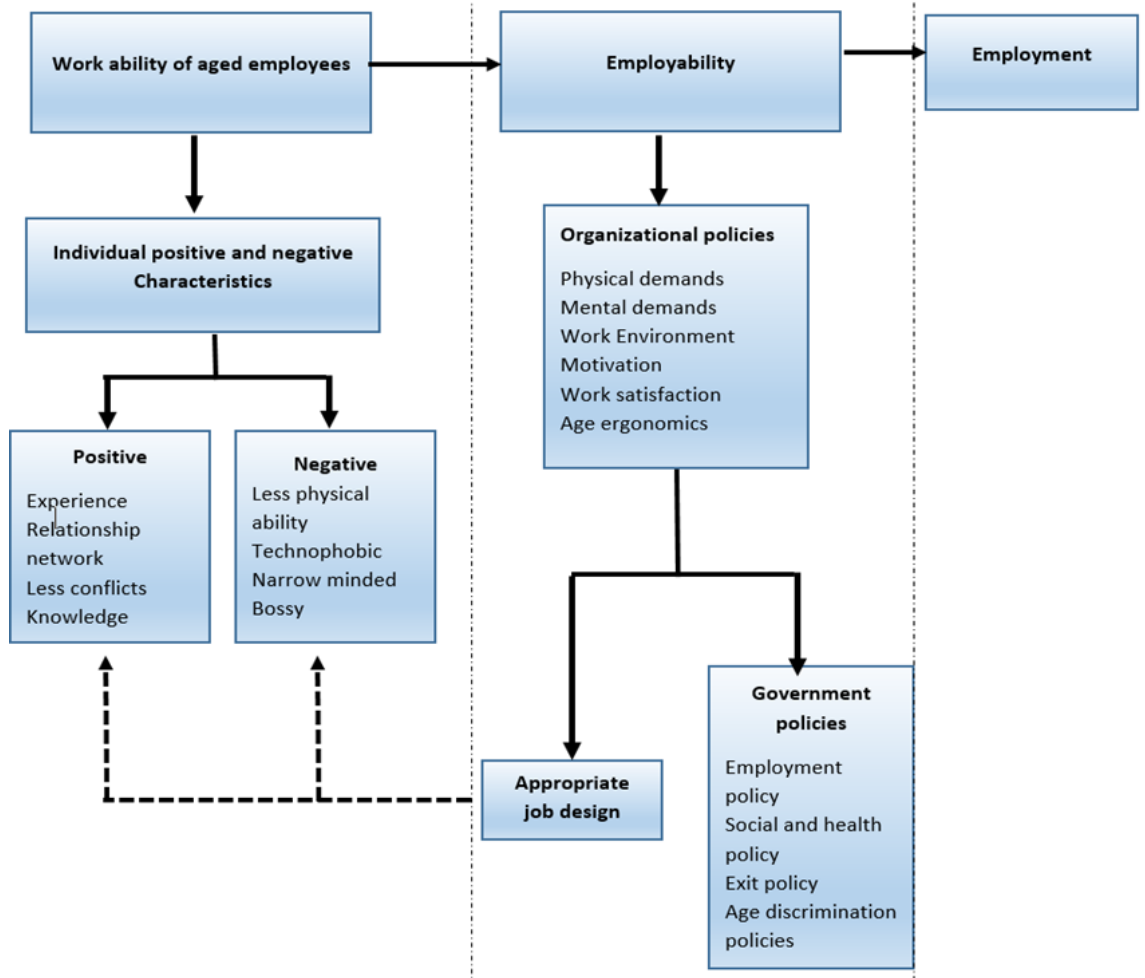


Figure 5. 1 Age dependent tailoring model to improve employment of aged workers

However, all stakeholders should recognize that the aging of the workforce is a great challenge, and all partners, individuals, enterprises, and societies should be attentive of their role to mitigate negative consequences. Accordingly, skilled labour shortages are likely to intensify in future than now, and experienced aged employees are a suitable option as the positive characteristics of aged employees have critical importance for any organization that seeks to preserve its competitiveness. Thus, failure to draw on the potential of those aged 60 years and more might turn out to be a grave strategic mistake. Firms that fail to hire aged workers may forgo potential advantages arising from a large pool of operative and managerial talents. Hence, it seems that discrimination against older workers might prove self-defeating.

### 5.3 Recommendations for Future research

This study will prompt further research on how to extend the working life and to what extent it is possible to have maximum output, particularly in Sri Lanka, considering all consequences. Future research should also pay more attention to different categories of jobs more suitable for aged employees, and employers' different views concerning older workers, concerning skilled or unskilled workers. Besides, do they undertake different measures for these two categories? Further, prompt attention should be given to investigating the training and development needs of aged employees and efficient management strategies to manage age employees.

### 5.4 Limitations of this study

A limitation of the study may be its generalizability. This investigation was not a national cross-section, but a sample public sector organization in the Hambanthota District. The extent to which the results generalize to other groups is unknown at this time, and determining this aspect must be left to future research. Also, the respondents are mostly in higher management positions. Often these respondents are not the only persons involved in personnel selection decisions, and their sole attitudes will not work for policy changes in the system.

There are several stakeholders in this system, such as colleague employees who might hold even strong stereotypical views regarding older workers than the managerial level employees. This suggests that the results of this study might even underestimate the negative stereotyping within organizations.

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**Annexure 1****Details of Managerial level respondents**

<b>Reference</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>Experience (No of Years)</b>
R1	Office of deputy Director of Agriculture	Provincial Director of Agriculture	10
R2	Department of post	Post Master	9
R3	District Engineer Office (Buildings)	District Engineer	10
R4	Divisional Secretariat (Thissamaharama)	Assistant Director Planning	17
R5	Divisional Secretariat (Lunugamvehera)	Assistant Divisional Secretary	11
R6	Disaster Management Unit	Assistant Director	12
R7	Divisional Secretariat (Katuwana)	Accountant	15
R8	Provincial revenue Department	Senior Assessor	29
R9	Pradeshiya Saba (Lunugamvehera)	Secretary	21
R10	Southern Development Authority	Assistant Director	10
R11	Office of deputy Director of Agriculture	Farm Manager	13
R12	Southern Development Authority	Administrative Officer	11
R13	Coastal Conservation Department	Coastal Conservation officer	15
R14	Sri Lankan Export development Board	Assistant Director	20
R15	Divisional Secretariat (Angunukolapallassa)	Assistant Divisional Secretary	20
R16	Southern Provincial Housing commissioners Department	Investigation Officer	15
R17	Department of social welfare and childcare services	Accountant	22
R18	Department of corporative Development	District Officer	17
R19	Divisional Secretariat (Belliththa)	Divisional Secretary	21
R20	Department of animal production and health	Assistant Director	11



R21	Department of Motor Traffic	Examiner	13
R22	Office of district director of health	Administrative Officer	12
R23	Department of Motor Traffic	Examiner	12
R24	District Election office	Assistant election commissioner	16
R25	Department of social welfare and childcare services	Administrative Officer	20
R26	Ayurveda Department , Southern Provincial Office	Administrative Officer	15
R27	Provincial revenue Department	Senior Assessor	17
R28	Office of district irrigation Engineer	District Irrigation Engineer	7
R29	District Director of Health Services	Planning Officer	9
R30	District Secretariat Hambantota	Director (Divinaguma)	14
R31	District Secretariat Hambantota	District Statistician	13
R32	Provincial revenue Department Regional office- Hamabantota	Senior Assessor	21
R33	Assistant Auditor General's Office	Audit Superintendent	17
R34	Divisional Engineers Office (Buildings)	Divisional Engineer	7
R35	Southern Provincial land commissioners' office	Deputy commissioner	13
R36	Zonal Education Office (Walasmulla)	Administrative Officer	11
R37	Tangalle Pradeshiya Saba	Secretary	25
R38	Provincial passenger transport Authority	Assistant Director	13
R39	Office of district director of health	Accountant	10
R40	Southern provincial Ayurveda department	Medical Superintendent	17

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**Annexure 2****Details of Aged respondents of aged employees**

Reference	Experience (No of years)	Reference	Experience (No of years )
R'1	32	R'13	33
R'2	23	R'14	30
R'3	28	R'15	28
R'4	38	R'16	31
R'5	31	R'17	29
R'6	35	R'18	21
R'7	28	R'19	38
R'8	30	R'20	35
R'9	21	R'21	33
R'10	27	R'22	40
R'11	29	R'23	20
R'12	31	R'24	29

### Annexure 3

#### Questionnaire from Managerial level Employees

Name of the organization: .....

Name .....

Designation.....

Experience years: .....

To what extent do you agree with following characteristics which have aged employees?

No	Description	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
1	Experienced			
2	Knowledgeable (have more tacit knowledge)			
3	Technophobic (fear or dislike of new technology)			
4	Mature decision making			
5	Hardworking			
6	Narrow minded			
7	Commitment to work			
8	Adaptable			
9	Not interested in learning new skills			
10	Do not want jobs with increased responsibilities			
11	Keep up with the speed of modern industry			
12	Prefer less challenging jobs			
13	Aged workers can learn new skills as easily as other employees			
14	Selfish			
15	Aged workers are able to develop more lasting relationships with other people			
16	Bossy			
17	Ability to take risks			
18	Untrainable			
19	Flexible			
20	Fewer conflicts within the organization			
21	Increase in absenteeism/sick leave			
22	Aged workers are less willing to take responsibilities at work			

23	workers are less willing to make sacrifices on behalf of the organization			
24	workers are more willing to help coworkers			
25	Aged workers wish to perform jobs more useful to society			
26	Performance of aged workers are less productive			
27	Have wider network of personal and professional relationships			
28	Less physical ability to perform tasks requiring greater physical effort			

What is your perception on following statements?

No	Description	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
1	After the typical retirement age aged workers could continue working for the organization as services providers such as consultants			
2	There are several obstacles to retirees continuing in the organization			
3	The jobs of aged employees, after the typical retirement age, could be more flexible (e.g. longer vacation; shorter working hours, part-time schedules)			
4	Will be beneficial to the organization as exit of aged worker implies loss of (tacit and explicit) knowledge to the organization			
7	More committed to work because they no longer had so many family duties			
5	The characteristics of the majority of aged workers are significantly valuable to organizations			
6	When Recruitment or selection for jobs younger workers are more preferred than aged workers			
9	The integration of aged workers in organizations will result in conflicts with their younger counterparts			
8	It would be beneficial for workers themselves than it is beneficial to organizations and society			
12	Less valuable to today's organizations because they are poorly skilled in new technologies			
11	Organizations do not have benefits in investing in aged workers			
10	Higher costs for the organization			

What do you think about the effectiveness of engaging aged employees for public sector organization?

Are you aware on the current issue of "Population aging in Sri Lanka"?

Yes	
No	

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**Annexure 4**
**Questionnaire for Aged Employees***Attitude of Senior Employees (recently retired and retire within next 2 years)*

Name

Experience in Years

Are you agreeing with the current retirement policy? Yes

No

No	Description of the attitude	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
1	My job has always been a source of my identity.			
2	Retirement is a difficult adjustment			
3	My family does not want me after I retire			
4	I will lose/lost the recognition in the society when I retire			
5	I am afraid I will/am a burden on my family as a retired person			
6	I'm worried that my retirement income will not sufficient to fulfill my needs			
7	Retirement causes people to age more rapidly			
8	Retirement causes people to suffer from mental problems			
9	Retirement causes people to get sick			
10	Retirement leads to premature death			
11	Retirement will not bother me because I am sure I can make new friends no matter where I go			
12	Retirement will allow me to do things with friends that I was not able to do while I was working			
13	I will be socially neglected after retirement			
14	I will feel lonely after I retire			
15	It will be hard to replace my friends from work			
16	I will not have much in common within my co-workers anymore			

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What do you think about extending working life of employees after 60 years?


Which age do you perceive people to be 'old'?


What are the work place divergence required in public sector to accommodate employees above 60 years?
