Ageing and Family in Asian Society: Future Roles of our Younger Generations

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Outline

- Dynamics of population ageing
- Implications of population ageing
- Changing families in Asia
- Towards intergenerational solidarity
- UN and the issue of intergenerational solidarity
- Concluding remarks
Population Ageing as a Result of Changes in Demographic Dynamics

- Fertility decline
- Mortality decline

Changes in population age structure

- Increase in % old-age population
- Decrease in % working age population
- Increase in old-age dependency ratio
Fertility Trends by Major Region of the World 1950-2005

Life Expectancy at Birth by Major Region of the World, 1950-2005

Rapid Ageing in Asian Region

Number and % of older persons (60+)

416 million (10%) in 2009

733 million (15%) in 2025

1.3 billion (25%) in 2050
# Age-dependency Ratios by Sub-regions, 1950-2050

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>1975</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2025</th>
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<td><strong>Child dependency ratios</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Total dependency ratios</strong></td>
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<td>East Asia and the Pacific</td>
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<td>South Asia</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>87</td>
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<td>59</td>
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</table>

Note: Dependency ratios are calculated as child population under 15 years and/or older population aged 60 and over to working age population 15-59. The data shows estimates until 2005 and medium-variant projections after 2005. Source: United Nations 2005.
Implications of Aging Population

The projected growth in the numbers and proportion of older population poses an array of challenges to our society.

- Long-term disability, Assistance in daily living
- Social isolation
- Late life economic security
- Burden on public expenditure (pension, health care, long-term residence care, etc).
Formal vs Informal Care

- Western model often portrays elderly as independent adult, seeking formal care system.
- But in reality, many families remain committed to care and support (Harper, 2006)
- Also, increasing older adults provide major sources of elder care
- In Asia, the family, especially children has long considered as a primary care provider for elderly.
- “Filial piety” towards parents demands co-residence and continual attention

Can the family in Asia continue its function?
The availability of family support for elderly is being disrupted or eroded by recent demographic, socio-economic and cultural change

- Decrease in average family size
- Increase in nuclear family
- More variety of living arrangement (living alone/consensual union)
### Average Household Size, Selected Countries, 1980s and 1990s

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
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<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>5.5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Changing Features of Asian Family (2)

- Increasing mobility of family members and resulting dispersed living arrangement
- Increasing labour force participation of women
- Disruption of family life through divorce or separation
- All making the provision of care for elderly more difficult than before,
Need for More Intergenerational Solidarity

How to cope with on-going rapid process of aging?
Policy should allow families to manage the responsibilities of family care
At the same time, move away from stereo-typical view of children as a primary care givers for elderly
Need for More Intergenerational Solidarity

- The inter-connectedness of all ages should be promoted in the manner that all age groups have meaningful roles to play.
- Meaningful opportunities should always be provided, so that interdependence between younger and older generations can be facilitated.
- The involvement of younger generation is extremely important.
- Younger generation can acquire life-cycle perspectives and benefit from the experience of older generations.
The international community has adopted a number of declarations calling for greater attention to intergenerational matters (Schindlmayr, 2006).


MIPAA recognizes intergenerational solidarity as a mechanism to respond to challenges of population ageing.
34. Design policies and approaches that are appropriate to the needs of the future generations of older persons, recognizing the rapidly changing socio-economic contexts and characteristics of the current younger generation”
UN and Intergenerational Issue: WPAY

- UN expanded World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond (WPAY), in 2004 by adding another 5 priority areas:
  - Intergenerational relations
  - Globalization
  - CIT
  - HIV/AIDS
  - Youth in conflict

A home care volunteer in the Republic of Korea brings new meaning to life for an elderly woman who lives alone.
Concluding Remarks

Asian region witnessed a persistent decline in fertility and improvement in longevity. As a result, the rapid process of population ageing has become an inevitable challenge to the society.

The family institution, which has provided a primary care for elderly in Asia, is now experiencing unprecedented changes in terms of size, structure and functions.

One of the strategies to cope with further advancement of ageing societies is to strengthen inter-generational solidarity at all levels.

The involvement of younger generations in intergenerational relations is extremely important.
Thank you !
TFR and Percentage of Population Over Age 60, ESCAP region, 1970-2050
Fertility trends in extremely low fertility countries (TFR below 1.6 children per woman)

## Percentage of working age population (15-59 years), 1950-2040

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>East Asia</th>
<th>South Asia</th>
<th>SE Asia</th>
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