

## International Migration and the ESCAP Region: A Policy-oriented Approach

By Ronald Skeldon\*

\* The author of this article is Senior Lecturer in Geography, University of Hong Kong. This article is a slightly abridged version of the background paper entitled "International Migration and the ESCAP Region: A Policy-oriented Approach" originally prepared for the Fourth Asian and Pacific Population Conference, which will be held in Bali, Indonesia, from 19 to 27 August 1992. The original paper with tables is available from ESCAP on request.

The major issue in the 1990s is not going to be fertility, but population movement

Total fertility in Asia declined by over one-fifth during the decade of the 1980s. While there are still some areas where fertility may actually be increasing and other areas where population growth remains persistently high, the experience of the last decade in this region has shown that population growth can indeed be slowed. This slowing has occurred to such an extent in parts of East and South-East Asia that fertility is now significantly below replacement level and the idea of zero population growth is a distinct possibility in several areas. As will be shown below, this decline in fertility is intimately related to changes in other population variables. What this trend has shown is that the major issue of concern in Asia and the Pacific in the 1990s is not going to be fertility but population movement, and particularly the movement from one country to another - that is, international migration. It is this issue that is likely to be the subject of intense political debate and is likely to have a profound impact on societies and economies throughout the ESCAP region. This article seeks to identify the major issues in international population migration that will be of concern to policy-makers in the ESCAP region. Readers seeking more empirical data, or a more theoretical approach, are referred to other papers that elaborate on these aspects in detail. [1/](#)

### The scope of the issue

In the mid-1960s, very few people left the countries of Asia for overseas destinations; by the late 1980s, well over 2 million were leaving their countries of origin every year. Given the total population of the region of over 3.1 billion, these still represented a small number, but particular areas within the region tended to be affected and particular sections of the populations of these areas. The impacts of emigration and immigration were therefore not evenly spread throughout the region.

The numbers of migrants can be assumed to be very conservative estimates. They refer essentially to those moving on labour contracts and to those moving abroad to settle. There are many other types of international movers within the region who fall outside the standard statistical nets to be classified as "international migrants". Hence, at the outset it must be emphasized that all estimates of numbers of migrants must be treated with great caution: they indicate the major trends taking place but they cannot be taken as precise measures. The trends are, nevertheless, clear: there is an increasing spatial mobilization of Asian populations, not only of increasing movements within countries but also of movements to destinations far beyond national frontiers.

Although a discussion of internal migration lies beyond the scope of this article, there is a close relationship between internal and international movements and they cannot be divided into two totally separate systems. As will be shown, many of the forces that are giving rise to increasing international movements within the ESCAP region are also generating significant within-country flows to the same destinations.

### A typology of international migration systems

Any division of international population flows into different "types" of migration can never be entirely satisfactory as these are never mutually exclusive and certain migrants fall into two or more types. Also, the prevalence of particular types is likely to vary through time and from one part of the world to another so one must be continually aware of these dynamic aspects of what appears to be a static classification. Typologies of migration or of migrants thus should not be seen as incarnate or immutable, but they are useful devices by which to examine a very complex process. There are different types of movers and the impacts that these different types have on societies of origin and destination vary. This article will identify five different international migration systems, each system being characterized by a different type of migrant.

Movements between Asian areas are of long tradition: the southward movement of Chinese peoples into the Nanyang and the eastward movement of Indian peoples, also into South-East Asia, which are of great

antiquity; the eastward movements of Muslim peoples across India and into South-East Asia from the eleventh century onwards; more recently, the movement of indentured labour out of India to the Pacific, the Caribbean and Africa under nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century colonialism; and the movement of "coolie" labour from China to South-East Asia and the Americas. These are all examples of migration that affected the lives of countless numbers of people over the centuries. In this article, the concern is with the last 25-30 years. As mentioned at the outset, this period began with very few international movements but, since then, most of the migration that has occurred has been to destinations outside the region. These have principally been the traditional countries of immigration in North America and Australasia [2/](#) and the oil-rich countries of West Asia. More recently, there have been increasing international movements within the region itself.

The flows to the different destinations can to some degree be associated with different systems of international migrants. For example, the movement to North America and to Australasia is primarily associated with settler migrants, while that to West Asia is dominated by labour migrants. The difference between these two systems of migration is that labour migrants are not allowed to settle permanently at their destinations or to bring any family members with them. The fact that labour migrants do tend to become more long-term residents in some cases or that settler migrants quickly return after establishing their resident status in other cases does not deny the fundamental theoretical difference between these two systems of international migration. In the case of the international movements within the Asian region, it is primarily a labour system of migration that is developing.

In addition to the settler and migrant labour systems of international migration, there are three other clearly defined migrant systems. These are the highly skilled migrant system, the student migrant system and the asylum-seeker migrant system. It might be argued that the highly skilled migration system is a subset of the labour migration system. However, the way it is organized and the characteristics of the migrants appear to justify its separation into a distinct system of its own. Hence, the basis for the typology of migration systems is that international migrants are being differentiated by the purpose of their move: to settle permanently in a new environment, to do a particular task of work, to study or undergo training, or to escape from a particular political system.

These different categories are sanctioned by formal recognition by either or both countries of origin and destination, which provide specific visas to enter or leave and the terms under which the migrants can stay at a particular destination. Although there are indeed linkages between internal and international movements, it is this legal recognition that has distinguished international migration as a separate category of movement and which also, it must be said, facilitates a much clearer division of migrant types than has been possible in the analysis of internal movements. Within each of the different systems of international migration, there are those who move without due authorization. Those who stay on as settlers after being students or labourers, those who claim student status after a brief tourist stopover and those who claim asylum status but are looking for work are but some examples. The problem of illegal or clandestine migration is growing throughout the ESCAP region and, indeed, the world but, rather than treat it as a distinct category, it will be discussed in this article within the structure of the various migration systems identified above. Each migration system has a different impact on economies and societies of origin and destination countries and hence the policy implications are different. These will be discussed for each migration system in turn.

### The settler migration system

Few countries in Asia over the last 30 years have allowed the permanent settlement of non-nationals within their territories. The few exceptions refer primarily to ethnic Chinese who have been granted citizenship or permanent resident status in states which are Chinese or overwhelmingly Chinese: for example, the resettlement in China of several hundred thousand overseas Chinese, particularly from Indonesia during the 1950s and 1960s, or of some 160,000 Chinese Vietnamese in the late 1970s. The offer of Singapore to accept over 100,000 people from Hong Kong, if they have doubts over the transition to Chinese sovereignty in 1997, would also fall into this category. With these exceptions, settler migration is primarily directed at Australia, Canada and the United States of America. The changing immigration policies of these countries from the mid-1960s set in motion trans-Pacific migration flows which, though they do not yet rival the trans-atlantic flows of the early years of this century, will nevertheless ultimately transform destination societies. From a negligible proportion of total immigrants to North America and Australia in the 1960s, Asians now represent around half of the total annual intake to these areas, with those from the Asian and Pacific region accounting for some 290,000 to the United States in 1989, 90,000 to Canada in 1990 and 63,000 to Australia in 1990-1991. The Philippines, the Republic of Korea, India, Hong Kong and China are the principal areas of origin of settler migrants to these countries.

There has also been a growing illegal settler migration often controlled by international criminal groups.

Passports and visas are forged and networks are created to channel people desperately trying to gain access to a developed country. The amounts of money involved are often substantial, so the participants, at least in the Asian cases, are not from the poorest strata of society. The major flows appear to involve people from China heading out through Hong Kong or Taiwan Province of China towards the United States, often through Latin America. There are also significant flows from South Asian countries towards Europe and North America.

### Policy issues

Because those leaving to settle elsewhere tend to include amongst their number some of the most highly educated and skilled members of their communities of origin, several Governments in the region are concerned about the issue of the "brain drain". Some destination countries, particularly Australia and Canada, select immigrants specifically on the basis of skill categories, which has tended to bias selection towards educated and highly motivated Chinese and Indian groups. Although the migration of family members and those taken as spouses of citizens has brought a greater spread through the skill spectrum, there is nonetheless a distinct bias towards the highly qualified in this migration system. While there may undoubtedly be skill loss, any policy measures that might be taken to attempt to restrict this flow are ultimately likely to be counter-productive. Freedom of movement is a basic human right and there is no clear evidence that the "loss" of these personnel causes any overall slowing of development. However, origin and destination countries especially do need to try to stem illegal settler migration effectively, to prevent abuse to the migrants during transit and after arrival. Economic recessions in the core metropolitan countries, difficulties experienced by Asian migrants settling in a different culture and the fact that the fastest growing economies in the world are now in the Asian and Pacific region may encourage potential emigrants to remain within the region. Given the current settler policies within the region mentioned at the outset of this section, these people will probably either have to stay within their own country or move to another country within the region as migrant workers or (more likely) as highly skilled migrants rather than settlers.

### The migrant worker migration system [3/](#)

At the same time as the settler migration system was accelerating from the early 1970s, so too was a system of contract labour migration developing. Initially, this was to the oil-rich countries of West Asia but changes in the nature of demand and changes within the Asian region itself have seen contract labour flows to destinations within Asia. These flows are going to be of increasing importance in the immediate future and will be one of the major issues that policy-makers in both origin and destination countries will have to face over the next decade. The basic flow data by country of origin are given in table 4. From a few thousand from the Philippines in the late 1960s, the annual outflow increased to over a million by the early 1980s and fluctuated around that number throughout the subsequent decade. There is considerable variation within this general trend though. The falling oil prices and general recession of the early 1980s brought a decline in annual leavers between 1984 and 1986. South Asian countries made their greatest contribution around the late 1970s and early 1980s, when they accounted for about half of the total contract labour flows and they never re-established their position after the 1984-1986 slowdown. The Republic of Korea too saw a similar pattern of outflow. The Philippines has been the most consistent of all the countries, maintaining a steady growth throughout the whole period except for a slight downturn from 1984 to 1986. Numbers in 1989 reached an all-time high for that country. Indonesia was a relatively late entrant but has seen spectacular and sustained growth since 1982. There have also been important shifts in the sex and skill composition of the contract labour flows.

The above differences reflect changes in the structure of the demand for labour. After the first oil price rise in 1973, the oil-producing countries embarked upon ambitious construction programmes. The labour was initially imported from neighbouring Arab countries but, as the demand grew, so the area of recruitment expanded and particularly to other Muslim countries in South Asia, as well as India. Essentially, these countries were supplying unskilled labour. Migrants from East and South-East Asia, on the other hand, possessed some kind of skill; they were carpenters, mechanics, drivers, or skilled construction workers, for example.

With the downturn in oil prices through the 1980s leading to the cut-back in new projects and the termination of the initial construction, there was a shift from construction to maintenance activities which favoured a relatively more highly skilled labour force. Increasing affluence in West Asia has increased the demand for services, which has led to the development of female contract labour flows in contrast to the essentially male flows of the early construction phase. Indonesia, in particular, as a late entrant to the system has been able to fill the niche of the increasing demand for Muslim female domestic servants among newly wealthy families in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

The annual flows give only a very general idea of the importance of the contract migration system, but the stock estimates of foreign labour in the countries of the Gulf Co-operation Council (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates) in the mid-1980s were in excess of 7 million, large numbers of whom were from other countries within West Asia, notably Egypt, Jordan and Turkey. The numbers from countries in the ESCAP region probably accounted for about half that number. Unlike the settler system, the contract labour migration system is essentially circular in nature. Workers are sent overseas and, if their contract is not renewed, they return home. The base is the home country and, as such, the workers are viewed as a national resource rather in the same way as other national natural resources. The workers earn cash which is brought home or sent as remittances, and these are now viewed as an important source of foreign exchange. The amounts of money involved are indeed substantial. For example, from figures compiled by the International Labour Organisation, over \$US1 billion was remitted every year to the Republic of Korea from 1979 to 1988, the last year for which data were available, and in 1982 the amount was almost \$US2 billion.<sup>4/</sup> Over \$US2.5 billion was remitted annually back to both India and Pakistan in the early to mid-1980s. Estimates of remittances are always problematic as it is readily acknowledged that only a proportion pass through official and/or measurable channels and the amounts are underestimates by an unknown quantity.

The country with the greatest pool of labour in the ESCAP region, China, is not yet a major player in the international contract migration system, although by 1989 it had sent some 66,000 workers to 123 countries. Beijing's attitude, expressed in 1979, reflects the approach of several countries in the region: "Our country is a very rich source of labour. This is a wonderful strong point that should be fully utilized.... If in a few years we can organize a million laborers to work abroad, each of them will earn \$US7,000-8,000 according to the ordinary wage rates in Western industrialized countries. If they send one-third of their wages back to support their families, our country will receive US\$2.5 billion in foreign exchange each year".<sup>5/</sup>

#### Policy issues

The change in the nature of the demand for labour and the general slowing in the economies in West Asia discussed above has meant that large numbers of returning migrants have to be re-absorbed into labour-surplus economies at home. Large numbers of people who have been accustomed to earning relatively high salaries (compared with "home" levels) may be unemployed at home or at best employed in jobs with much lower wage rates. This may be a possible source of social discontent. Rather than engaging in social disruption, these people are perhaps more likely to participate in movement to sources of work within the region, although as yet we have little information about the behaviour of returned contract labourers. Whether they do actually move within the region remains an important area for future research, but what is clear is that they form a potential reservoir for further migration.

The emergence of international flows between countries within the Asian region has been one of the significant policy-relevant developments of the last decade. It must be emphasized that, so far, the actual numbers of movers within these flows rarely rival - although there are a few important exceptions - the annual numbers of contract workers or settlers moving to destinations outside the region that were discussed above. Their importance derives essentially from a unique situation: for the first time, countries in the region that previously had tightly restricted immigration have had to come to terms with having to depend upon imported labour and labour that may come from culturally, socially and politically different systems. A second reason why these intra-regional flows are assuming importance is their potential for future growth: they are likely to become numerically much larger in the immediate future.

The intra-regional flows are directed primarily at the centres of economic growth in Asia: at Japan and the newly industrializing economies (NIEs) of the Republic of Korea, Taiwan Province of China, Hong Kong and Singapore. These areas have seen some of the most rapid rates of economic growth in the world over the last 20 years. All have experienced associated precipitous declines in fertility as women have been incorporated into the labour force and all are now seeing the effects of continuing demand for labour in the context of declining rates of labour force growth, which has resulted in rapidly increasing labour costs.

These dynamic economies have affected migration flows in the region to a much greater degree than simply attracting migrants to their boundaries. Capital has been invested in many parts of the region as entrepreneurs have sought out areas with ever cheaper supplies of labour. Japanese investments in Thailand and Indonesia have stimulated movements to large urban centres in these countries, but it has perhaps been the areas close to the dynamic economies themselves that have seen the greatest changes: in Johor State across the causeway from Singapore in southern Malaysia, in Guangdong Province adjacent to Hong Kong in southern China; and, to a lesser extent, in Fujian Province across the strait from Taiwan Province of China and in Shandong Province across the Gulf from the Republic of Korea, both in China. There, investments from the NIEs have drawn in migrants from other parts of China and other parts of Malaysia.



The Malaysian case is particularly interesting. As Malaysians move to the growth centre of Johor, where 276,000 new jobs are projected to be created by the year 2005, a vacuum is created in the rural areas from which they leave. This, in turn, has been filled by migrants from Indonesia, the majority of them illegal, who have been recruited (usually by Chinese middle-men) to take up jobs in the rural sector. At a conservative estimate, there are half a million Indonesians in the Malaysian Peninsula, accounting for 8-10 per cent of the labour force.<sup>6/</sup> Clearly, it is not just the growth of Johor that has generated these latter flows but the whole system of urbanization in Malaysia, which has seen the rapid growth of Kuala Lumpur in particular, but this whole complex interchange of population shows the close linkages between internal and international flows. There are similar internal flows towards the Special Economic Zone of Shenzhen across the border from Hong Kong in Guangdong Province and, further afield, towards the rapidly growing urban centres around the Pearl River delta. The Guangdong provincial economy, benefiting from overseas investments there, is gradually disarticulating itself from the economy of China as it becomes linked to the international economy through the energetic pursuit of reform policies.

Immigration to the countries of Asia is still tightly controlled and few migrants from other countries can become permanent residents or citizens. Many migrant workers, the exact numbers are not known, engage in the kinds of activities that are shunned by natives: the dirty, dangerous and demanding jobs that often command very low salaries such as jobs in construction, sanitation, menial jobs in the catering trade, dish washers, and so on. In some of the more developed economies of Asia, there is considerable official and/or public resistance to the importation of labour, even though there is unequivocal evidence of labour shortages. This resistance may be for cultural reasons or because unionized labour sees a threat to job security or wage levels. Several areas, most notably Taiwan Province of China where some 300,000 foreign workers are projected to be needed for industrial projects over the next 10 years, have recently changed their laws to accept the need for significant numbers of immigrant labourers.<sup>7/</sup>

Many of the migrant workers, again the exact numbers are unknown, are illegal; their entry may have been legal but they either change their purpose of stay or overstay their visas. Hence, there are increasing numbers in a grey world of illegality who can be exploited by employers and others and who find themselves in extremely vulnerable situations. This may apply most to women, who are increasingly moving to take positions as domestic servants and as "entertainers" in many parts of Asia. For example, there were at the end of 1991 some 80,000 domestic servants in Hong Kong, 70,000 of them from the Philippines. There were another 40,000 domestic servants in Singapore out of a total foreign workforce of perhaps 170,000, representing 11 per cent of the total labour force. The incorporation of women into the labour forces of the NIEs and the increasing affluence of families have generated a demand for domestic help which cannot be met locally.

#### Policy issues

The major policy issue revolves around the status of the migrant worker: how the rights of national and immigrant workers can be respected and protected. Special attention needs to be focused on the particular needs of female migrant workers. Once a decision to allow the entry of migrant workers has been taken, the major policy concerns will be to control the number of immigrants, to prevent the opening of the flood gates to mass immigration and to try to ensure that migrants return at the end of their contracts. The experience of Europe has shown that contract labourers tend to become virtually permanent settlers with the passage of time. The close proximity of dynamic Asian economies to huge reserves of underemployed labour means that the future of intra-regional migration in Asia is potentially vast. The main flows are likely to be out of China towards Japan, the Republic of Korea, Taiwan Province of China and towards Guangdong Province in China.

#### The highly skilled migration system

As mentioned previously in this article, the highly skilled migrants (sometimes termed "high-level manpower" migrants) could be seen as a subset of the contract labour system in that many of the highly skilled are on contract too. However, many are not and there appear to be sufficient differences in the way in which the highly skilled flows operate to distinguish a separate system. It must also be admitted that, compared with settler and contract labour migration, relatively little is known about the movement of the highly skilled.<sup>8/</sup>

The flows of the highly skilled are associated essentially with the development of international business, transnational corporations and banks, and the transfer of government officials and international civil servants of one type or another. Hence, although personnel may be recruited by Governments and companies for particular jobs in particular parts of the world (with their own specialist recruiting or "head-hunting" agencies), many are regular government or company officials on transfer. There is much less resistance to allowing the entry of this type of worker into Asian countries compared with the more lowly

skilled contract worker. Countries that have strict quotas on immigration, as have the majority of countries in the Asian region, often have no restrictions upon the number of highly skilled who enter, provided that they have a job to go to. The reasons for this are several. Firstly, the migrants are the responsibility of the donor Government, international agency or company, not the receiver country. Their move may be part of a career path and it is virtually certain that they will move on to another country or return home within the specified time of their contract. Secondly, the majority come from developed countries or from developed niches within developing countries and are not moving to escape unemployment or economic hardship at home. Overstaying is therefore not a major problem. Thirdly, these migrants not only bring particular skills that may be transferred to destination areas but are also likely to spend considerable amounts of money during their residence to the benefit of local economies. Their numbers within the region are not small and have risen dramatically over the last decade. For example, the annual numbers assigned to overseas branches of Japanese and Korean businesses rose from 13,000 and 31,000, respectively, in 1975 to 31,000 and 87,000 in 1988.<sup>9</sup> Associated with this are short-term visits for business which account for millions of person-moves within the region every year. Hence, this system consists of flows within networks of international business and diplomacy centred upon core metropolitan countries and is quite different from the contract labour flows from developing to more developed countries. Clandestine migration is of little importance in this system of international migration.

#### Policy issues

These are related more to matters of overall economic policy of how multinational corporations are treated by Governments and to the politics of the international aid business and diplomacy than to population issues as such. The policy issues relevant to these flows thus lie at a higher level than is normally considered in a discussion of migration flows.

#### The student migration system

Students are often excluded from discussions of international migration on the assumption that they are not permanent migrants. They are important from several points of view: their sheer number; the potential loss for countries of origin and potential gain for countries of destination; and the converse, the potential gain in knowledge for countries of origin. In 1989-1990, there were over 208,000 students from Asia enrolled in degree programmes in the United States alone and 38,000 in Canada. Asian students represented over half of the foreign student body in both these countries. There is also considerable movement of students within Asia, particularly to Japan (although it must be accepted that all those on student visas may not be studying full-time), where there were over 45,000 "studying in Japanese schools" in 1989, up from 20,000 in 1985. In 1989, over 40,000 of the students were from other Asian countries, with large numbers from China in particular.

The majority of those on student visas are pursuing tertiary-level studies or other advanced training. Their initial education was probably in their countries of origin. Asian countries must therefore balance the potential loss of a scarce resource against the benefits to the country that might accrue upon the return of the student with advanced knowledge. Wastage does occur as students later become settlers overseas. For example, during the 1960s, it was estimated that only about 5 per cent of students going overseas from Taiwan Province of China returned, although this proportion had increased markedly by the late 1980s. Then again, in the Republic of Korea, it was estimated that between 20 and 30 per cent of professionals there had been traced overseas, mainly in the United States but also in Japan, which has been an important factor in the transfer of technology to that NIE.<sup>10</sup> A third aspect is that further education overseas may provide an outlet for a group of people who cannot readily be absorbed into nascent economies and who otherwise may add to the "educated unemployed" and possibly lead to social problems.

#### Policy issues

Ideally, countries need to link their education systems to manpower needs. Countries can also seek to take advantage of training programmes in other areas to upgrade the skills of their labour forces. This is a realistic approach to education as many developing countries will not, initially at least, be able to afford to establish the expensive advanced training and research facilities necessary to generate the range of skills required for a modern economy. Planners in countries should be in a position to select the types of skills required and identify students in those fields for further training. The terms of scholarship schemes can be such to encourage award-holders to return to give service to their countries of origin after having completed their studies overseas. With a few exceptions, the majority of students do return home upon completion of their studies, although some may migrate again later.

#### The asylum-seeker migration system<sup>11/</sup>

This flow consists of people fleeing from the political situation in one country to seek a sanctuary in another country. Unfortunately, such flows are still numerous within the Asian region, with hundreds of thousands of displaced people around the borders of Afghanistan, mainly in Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran (with numbers still in excess of 5 million), around the boundary of Cambodia, mainly in Thailand (now with some 300,000) and, increasingly, close to the boundary of Myanmar in Bangladesh. People still leave Viet Nam in small boats for destinations in South-East Asia, Hong Kong or even further afield, and there are other "smaller" numbers of asylum-seekers in many areas such as the 125,000 Sri Lankan Tamils in south India. Perhaps the most optimistic one can be is that solutions to the situations in Afghanistan and Cambodia now appear to be much closer than a decade ago and asylum-seekers are returning, even if many hundreds of thousands are still waiting either to return home or to be resettled.

The general pattern of this migration system is of fairly short-distance movements to camps in border areas, where refugees can await changed conditions in their homeland or await resettlement in a country outside the region, mainly in the traditional settler societies of North America and Australasia, and also in Europe. Since 1975, more than a million persons have been resettled in these areas from South-East Asia alone, although resettlement of displaced persons from other parts of Asia has not been significant. Long-distance spontaneous movement of groups of people claiming asylum in Western countries from South and South-East Asia has increased since the early 1980s.

Perhaps the greatest change affecting this system has been the onset of "compassion fatigue" in developed countries, which is reflected in an increasing reluctance to accept for potential resettlement many of those who are fleeing their countries of origin. The changed international political situation has meant that those leaving are given much closer scrutiny and many are screened out from consideration as asylum-seekers and classified as "economic migrants" instead. To some extent, this stream could be considered an "illegal" part of the asylum-seeker flow; this is always assuming that a clear distinction can be made between "economic migrants" and those escaping persecution because of their beliefs. Often this distinction will be made on the basis of expediency and realpolitik rather than on humanitarian grounds.

#### Policy issues

Again, these flows are not subject to easy policy intervention. They are created by internal tensions of nations at particular stages of their political development. These are often particularly acute as states newly independent from colonial rule seek to develop a sense of nationalism. It is incumbent upon the international community to do everything it can to create those conditions within the region that will allow all those who wish to return home to do so.

#### The causes and consequences of international migration

The causes for the migration are, generally, the disparities in development between countries in the region and beyond, and the relationship between development and fertility decline. Numerically, the most important flows are towards the most developed regions, although not necessarily from the least developed regions. Flows arise only once contacts have been established with potential destination countries and these are the result of economic and/or political involvement in the origin country by corporations or Governments of destination countries. All the most developed areas both within and outside the region have undergone the demographic transition to low levels of fertility: all are below the replacement level of 2.1. All are concerned about the present and future growth of their labour forces and, hence, there is a growing demand for labour both outside the region and increasingly within the region. This is the principal force behind international migration in the region, a force that, once started, tends to take on a momentum of its own, with migration leading to further migration as family ties build up. Initially, the targets are those with particular skills or levels of education (although some short-term flows consist of unskilled labour) while later flows may have a wider range of such skills and levels.

The consequences of the flows can be profound. They provide a link between countries that may be very different in terms of levels of development but also in terms of culture. Significant change to the societies of both origin and destination can be expected: difficulties incorporating different language groups into destination areas and disruptions to "traditional" society through subtle influences brought by returning migrants to origin areas, for example. The volume of remittances and their importance to economies in areas of origin have already been raised. Although the amounts of money have been a significant source of foreign exchange, it is not clear whether remittances are critical for the development of the economies of origin areas. While their use may stimulate consumption rather than investment, on balance they do appear to generate "more benefits than costs to developing countries", although these may not on their own promote self-sustaining development.<sup>12/</sup>

The loss of skilled personnel is also an issue that is of concern to policy makers in origin areas. To some

extent, this has to be balanced against new skills learned overseas that might help countries of origin if the migrants return. However, experience has suggested that, with regard to labour migration in particular, the skills learned may be limited or they may be inappropriate for the needs of origin areas. Many emigrants never do return and there is indeed a loss of skills and of the investment that was made to create those skills. But there is no simple correlation between skill loss and development. Some areas from which significant migration of skilled and educated people has occurred, such as the Republic of Korea and Taiwan Province of China, also achieved rates of economic growth that were among the highest in the world. Other countries of high emigration such as the Philippines have achieved much lower growth rates and medical services have indeed been prejudiced because of loss of personnel, for example. There is also the difficult issue of whether the origin areas have the capacity to absorb the skilled manpower, and emigration may act as a safety valve that channels the skilled towards productive activity overseas rather than consigning them to unemployment in home areas. Factors other than emigration are likely to be of greater importance for development, although much more research needs to be directed towards this issue.

### The Pacific [13/](#)

The above discussion has focused primarily on Asia and the numerically largest international flows in the ESCAP region. Although small in volume, emigration from the small countries and territories of the Pacific has perhaps made the greatest relative impact on societies and economies in that region. These societies have come to depend upon remittances as one of their major sources of national income. In several cases, there are more islanders living in metropolitan countries in North America and Australasia than there are in the island countries and territories themselves. This is the case for the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau; and one-third of ethnic Samoans live outside Samoa and almost a quarter of Tongans live outside Tonga. [14/](#)

The results of two large-scale studies into the impact of this migration appear to have reached very different conclusions. [15/](#) The study coordinated by the South Pacific Commission and the International Labour Organisation regarded migration as essentially destructive in removing the most dynamic elements of island populations. This led to labour shortages, declining local production and a trend towards individualism that undermined traditional social structures. Migration had not, however, relieved rural population pressures, which remained high because of persistent high fertility. An alternative view presented by researchers from New Zealand saw migration as essentially supportive for development. The only realistic way for islands to achieve living standards approaching acceptable modern standards was to participate in labour markets in core countries. The subsequent remittance income to the islands supported those left behind. This, supplemented by official aid from the core countries, offset declines in local production. The home area society depended heavily on public service activities to build and maintain infrastructure and distribute aid and remittances. This type of economy has become known by the acronym MIRAB (migration, remittances, aid and bureaucracy).

Whether migration supports or undermines the community will depend upon how advanced migration from a particular area happens to be. Where migration is well advanced and the majority of young people, both male and female, are spending most of their time living and working overseas, then the origin area is likely to be already in decline. Where only some of the young people are working overseas and these are mainly males, then emigration may act as a brake on permanent emigration and support the home community. Given the increasing demand for labour in the core countries consequent upon fertility decline, it is likely that there will be an inexorable shift in the centre of gravity away from the islands of the Pacific, although this may be exceedingly slow in those areas that have not yet developed a tradition of emigration. Looking ahead a hundred years, it is difficult to disagree with Gerard Ward when he sees the Pacific as an "empty quarter", with the descendants of islanders living in the cities of the core metropolitan countries and the islands themselves essentially only resource and recreational niches within the global economy. [16/](#)

### Conclusion

With fertility decline either well advanced or under way throughout most of the ESCAP region, international migration is likely to be the biggest population-related issue over the next decade. The movement across national boundaries, particularly within the region, is going to assume much greater importance in terms of its numbers and in terms of its consequences for both origin and destination countries. International migration will mix peoples from very different backgrounds and cultures. It will favour the diffusion of new ideas throughout the region. It has the potential to stimulate development but also to create stresses within societies. It will unquestionably promote profound change within the Asian-Pacific region. Given the economic and demographic developments in the region which have seen the emergence of labour-surplus and labour-deficit areas, and richer areas and poorer areas, the international flows are inevitable. Rather than attempting to stem the flows, policy makers must be prepared to plan for them. Hence, it is imperative that the flows should be monitored and their consequences analysed so that appropriate policies can be designed and implemented for the benefits of national Governments and for the



migrants themselves.

#### Footnotes

1. See two articles by this author, Skeldon, 1991 and 1992, the collection of essays edited by Fawcett and Carino, 1987, and articles by Appleyard, 1988 and 1991; Appleyard and Stahl, 1992; Stahl, 1991; and Gunasekaran and Sullivan, 1990.
2. Although Australia and New Zealand are part of the ESCAP region, it is more logical in a discussion of international population flows to include them with the United States and Canada as countries that have a tradition of immigration.
3. This system has received considerable attention in the literature. See, in addition to the general references cited in footnote 1, Gunatilleke (ed.) 1986; Arnold and Shah (eds.) 1986; Abella and Atal (eds.) 1986; Stahl and Habib, 1991; Cremer, 1988 and Martin, 1991.
4. The data can be found ILO, 1990, table 2.
5. Cited in Fang Shan, 1991: 65-66.
6. Information on Indonesian movement to Malaysia is given in Hugo, 1991. See also Guinness, 1990.
7. See the special issue of Overseas Employment Info Series, vol. 4, No. 1, March 1991, devoted to Taiwan Province of China.
8. For a preliminary theoretical framework, see Salt and Findlay, 1989.
9. Data cited in Skeldon, 1992.
10. For information on students from Taiwan Province of China, see Hsieh et al., 1989; and Kao, 1971; for the Republic of Korea, see Kuznets, 1987.
11. For discussions of this system, see Chan (ed.) 1990, the essays in Rogge (ed.) 1987, Zolberg, 1989; and Widgren, 1989.
12. This quotation is taken from the excellent review of these issues by Stahl and Habib, 1991: 177. See also Stahl and Arnold, 1986; and Russell, 1986.
13. This section is taken from Skeldon, 1991.
14. See Hayes, 1991 for a presentation of detailed data.
15. These are summarized in Hayes, 1991. The views themselves are presented in Connell, 1987; and Bertram and Watters, 1985.
16. Ward, 1989.

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## Population and Human Resources Development

By Gavin W. Jones <sup>\*</sup>

<sup>\*</sup> The author of this article is Professor and Coordinator, Department of Demography, The Australian National University, Canberra. It was prepared originally as the working paper entitled "Population and Human Resources Development", E/ESCAP/POP/SFAP/6, to be presented at the Fourth Asian and Pacific Population Conference to be held in Bali, Indonesia, from 19 to 27 August 1992.

It is important to recognize that ... people must be central in development

The emphasis in development planning underwent a major shift between the 1950s and the 1970s. Development planning in the 1950s stressed economic growth, which was to be achieved largely through industrialization. Lack of capital and of supporting physical infrastructure were seen as the key bottlenecks to growth; rates of savings and investment therefore needed to be raised. As Arthur Lewis put it in his influential book on economic development, "the central problem in a theory of economic growth is to understand the process by which a community is converted from being a 5 per cent net saver to a 12 per cent net saver" (Lewis, 1955: 225-226).

Dissatisfaction with this approach built up in the 1960s, associated with a general disillusionment with purely growth-oriented development strategies, which resulted in neglect of the social sectors and appears to have done little to reduce poverty levels (Amjad, 1987: 1-2). Econometric studies showed that only a relatively small part of economic growth could be explained in terms of traditional inputs of labour and capital (Denison, 1967). It was hypothesized that an important part of the "residual" pertained to the quality of the labour force, including its levels of health and education.

Thus began an era in development economics in which investment in human capital was considered as important as other forms of investment. The link between female education and declining fertility rates was seen as an additional benefit from such an emphasis, because of its contribution to the problem of high population growth rates. At the same time, an employment-oriented strategy which emphasized both the volume of employment and increasing productivity, especially in the so-called "informal" sectors of the economy, was achieving greater prominence both because of the pressing needs of a rapidly growing labour force and because it was seen as the best route for ensuring that the gains of economic development were distributed equitably among individuals and regions.

The mid-1980s saw considerable ferment of ideas about human resources development, focused especially in the Asian and Pacific region, culminating in the emergence of a new perspective, most clearly expressed in the Jakarta Plan of Action on Human Resources Development in the ESCAP Region developed by ESCAP and adopted by the Governments of the countries of the region at Jakarta in 1988. The Plan focused on the central role of human beings as the key factor in the development process; called for balanced and integrated treatment of the supply and demand factors in relation to human resources development; and emphasized participation in economic activity, particularly employment (ESCAP, 1991: 1). It sees the earlier human capital approach as too supply-sided, and seeks to link:

"the productive role of human resources that is the core of human capital theory with the consumption role of human resources embodied in the quality of life literature. The mechanism that links these two roles is rewarded participation in economic activity, which simultaneously provides individuals with the incentive to invest in human capital and the means for improving their quality of life. ... Not only are...investments in human capital a vital source of increased production, but the most important human capital investments, in health and education, are simultaneously highly valued items of consumption in developing countries and among the most important determinants of the quality of life. Thus, the characteristics that, from a consumption perspective, reflect the individual's quality of life, constitute the quality of the individual's human capital from a production perspective." (Corner, 1991: 8).

Streeten (1983: 3) puts it well and succinctly: investment in human resources has three major benefits: it is a valued consumption good, it raises productivity and it lowers reproductivity.

Although this article adheres to its assigned brief, it can be argued that the more holistic perspective just noted requires that the focus should be on "human development" rather than "human resources development", in order to de-emphasize the traditional focus on humans merely as an input in production.

What governs the quality of human resources, and how can this quality be improved? Clearly, a number of factors are relevant: the influence of parents and society at large, the influence of the school system and formal education, and (although it is harder to document) the person's level of health and nutrition (Leibenstein, 1971; Berg, 1973; Wheeler, 1983; Behrman, 1990:54-58). Improvements in the education and health levels of a population are mutually reinforcing in a number of ways. Children of educated mothers, for example, are much more likely to survive to maturity than those of the less educated, even when one controls for income and social class (Cleland and van Ginneken, 1988); healthier children miss fewer days of school; low mortality levels mean less educational



investment "wasted" on children who die; and increasing expectation of life may explain the growing propensity of parents to invest in human capital inputs for their children (Ram and Schultz, 1979).

#### Role of human resources in the rapid East Asian economic growth

Easterlin (1981) has made a case for giving the expansion of formal education systems a central place in explaining international differences in rates of economic growth. This emphasis is supported by the analyses of Denison (1986), Barro (1989) and a number of other recent studies reviewed in Behrman (1990). Increasing attention has been given to the role of human resources development in the remarkable economic growth in parts of East and South-East Asia notably Hong Kong, Malaysia, Republic of Korea, Taiwan Province of China and Thailand, which have led the world over the past three decades. There is a widening gap in the average incomes of the three main regions of East Asia (including Japan, but excluding China), with four or five times the per capita income of South-East Asia (Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines) and those countries with four to five times the per capita income of South Asia. This wide gap is the result of large differences in the post-war growth rates of the three regions; in the 1950s, per capita incomes in the highest income countries exceeded those in the lowest by only three or four times (Oshima, 1986:60).

Oshima (1986) notes the difficulties in tracing connections between large aggregates such as gross domestic product (GDP) and human resources when the intervening variables such as the quality of technologies and institutions are so fundamental in the development process. He argues that differentials in income levels between East and South Asia in recent years cannot be attributed to any single human resource or group of human resource endowments (Oshima, 1987). It is probably more a matter of earlier development of human resources, success (relative rather than absolute) in utilizing as large a proportion of their labour force as possible, and an acceleration in growth by bringing in machinery to substitute for labour. Full use of the labour force and mechanization made possible extensive training through learning by working with higher technologies.

Ogawa, Jones and Williamson (1992) note that the sources of the spectacular economic dynamism along the Asian-Pacific rim must be embedded somewhere in the following list of factors: substantial investment in infrastructure; efficient absorption of advanced technology; a stable political environment; and an impressive commitment to human capital formation. They recognize that the Philippine experience demonstrates that an early commitment to human resources development is not enough, although they do stress that the human capital "infrastructure" that is in place in the Philippines could provide a springboard for growth if other elements of the development equation can be put in place.

Human resources development along the rim has been intimately tied to population dynamics. The region has recently been undergoing a dramatic demographic revolution which parallels its spectacular economic growth. In East Asia, and much of South-East Asia, population growth rates have been declining very rapidly in the past quarter of a century. These trends have had important implications for what is called "human capital deepening". The most straightforward connection is that during later stages of the demographic transition, the labour force continues to grow for some decades after fertility decline, causing the aggregate labour-force participation rate to rise. These events contribute to development by enabling per capita income to rise as workers become a larger share of the population. Part of this effect comes from a favourable change in the age distribution, and part of it from the rise in married women's participation in the labour market as the time they devote to child-rearing declines. In addition, households and nations are likely to find it easier to set aside resources for accumulation when the "dependency burden" declines (Williamson, 1992). A number of the latecomers along the Asian-Pacific rim (e.g. Indonesia and Thailand) are now in the midst of those stages of the demographic transition where these economic advantages can have their most important impact. In contrast, Japan has entered a more mature demographic phase of ageing which has unfavourable implications for its future economic performance.

Although such forces have been important and will continue to be so for some time, the impressive commitment to human resources development along the rim cannot be explained solely by these transitional demographic connections. Other forces have been at work: even after adjusting for favourable demographic conditions, the rim appears to maintain a higher commitment to human resources development than does most of the rest of the world. Thus, East Asia has higher levels of literacy and educational attainment, and invests more of its GNP in both, than does Latin America, even after controlling for level of development.

Many Asian countries, however, especially in South Asia, continue to experience high fertility, rapid population growth and high dependency ratios. Their prospects for human resources development, and the contribution it makes to economic growth, are much less favourable.

#### Implications of demographic change for human resources development

As noted in a recent ESCAP report (ESCAP, 1992: 6-7), the implications of demographic change for human resources development are more complex than the mere effect of the increase in population on the demand for employment, education, health and other services. There are also synergism involved. Reduction in infant mortality

can help lower health-care costs, thus producing savings or freeing funds for other human capital investment. When such reduction is brought about by improved birth-spacing, a human capital benefit manifests itself in the form of an increase in the number of surviving, better-nourished children, who also perform better in school. Targeting women as recipients of human capital investment, through informal population education and formal schooling, leads to improved planning of families, child-spacing, child-care procedures and nutritional knowledge, which all contribute to the quality of future human capital. Rural-to-urban migration, as well as migration from poor to rich countries, affects the costs and benefits of human resources development; environment and resource depletion, or degradation caused by or associated with population increase, also affect the quality of life; women's reproductive behaviour is associated with their social and economic role and status and therefore has implications for human resources development.

The implications of changes in the demographic situation for the development of human resources are clearly complex and very important. In view of this, it is surprising that the first Human Development Report (for 1990) published by UNDP, although it offers as one of 15 points in its "overview" the statement that "a significant reduction in population growth rates is absolutely essential for visible improvements in human development levels", fails to mention fertility or birth rates, or the need for a reduction in population growth rates, or the independent effect of the number of children in a household on human development, at any point in the main text.

#### Demographic factors in attainment of national education goals

A number of studies have examined in detail the demographic elements in the attainment of educational goals (Jones, 1975, 1990; and references contained therein). A key point to be made is that, despite the burden of rapid population growth, which constantly increased the size of the target population, considerable progress has been made in Asian countries in recent decades in expanding educational systems to cover the population more effectively (see table 1). However, some countries have lagged behind badly and many failed to reach the UNESCO Karachi Plan target of universal primary school education by the year 1980. The lag in educational progress in Bangladesh, Pakistan and Papua New Guinea, especially for girls, is very noticeable. More could have been achieved in many countries if the population had not been growing as rapidly: "more" either in terms of proportion of the target population provided with education or health services, or the quality of the services provided, or both (Schultz, 1985; Jones, 1990: 36-40).

Another important point is that rapid population growth has not been an insuperable obstacle to achieving higher levels of education among the population, provided that Governments gave high priority to educational expenditure; but the reality of sacrosanct military budgets and a wide range of other competing claims on government funds has meant that progress in reaching the goal of a highly educated and healthy population was in fact significantly retarded. One element of great concern is the poor quality of education and health services throughout much of Asia. The quantitative expansion, impressive as it is, disguises in some cases decline in quality, and in most cases continuing serious shortfalls in quality.

Enrolment rates are a poor index of the quality of education because they reveal neither what is being learned by the pupils who occupy the school benches nor what proportion of pupils are irregular in attendance or leave the system before achieving even basic literacy. The rapid expansion of education in most developing countries over the past two decades has made the task of raising the quality of education exceedingly difficult. Large numbers of new teachers have had to be recruited and trained, new schools built, new curricula developed and new textbooks produced. It has not been easy to provide adequate in-service training to the existing teaching force when the force itself is growing so rapidly. Nor has it been easy to provide education of an adequate standard in the rural areas, where teachers are generally more poorly trained, buildings and equipment inadequate, repetition of grades among pupils high, premature school-leaving and absenteeism (especially at harvest-time) common, and the appropriate content of education still unresolved. A visit to an isolated rural primary school in one of the poorer countries of the region is usually adequate evidence of the enormous task still facing these countries in providing quality education.

Table 1: Indices of educational development, Asian countries and areas

	Percentage of age group enrolled in education										Persistence to Grade 4 as a percentage of cohort				Females per 100 males			
	Primary				Secondary				Tertiary		Female Male				Primary Secondary			
	Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	Female	1965	1988	1970	1987	1970	1987	1970	1987	1970	1987
	1965	1987	1965	1987	1965	1987	1965	1987	1965	1988	1970	1987	1970	1987	1970	1987	1970	1987
East Asia	88w	125w	-	120w	23w	45w	-	40w	1w	5w	-	78w	-	81w	-	84w	50	71w
South Asia	68w	89w	52w	73w	24w	35w	12w	24w	4w	-	45w	-	48w	-	57w	-	40w	-

Bangladesh	49	59	31	49	13	18	3	11	1	5	-	-	-	30	47	66	14	45
Bhutan	7	24	1	17	0	4	-	1	-	-	-	26	-	29	5	59	3	41
Lao People's Dem. Rep.	40	111	30	100	2	23	1	19	0	2	-	-	-	(14)	59	78	36	73
Nepal	20	82	4	57	5	26	2	-	1	5	-	-	-	(27)	18	-	16	-
China	89	132	-	124	24	43	-	37	1	2	-	76	-	77	-	83	47	69
India	74	98	57	81	27	39	13	27	5	-	42	-	45	-	60	-	39	51
Pakistan	40	52	20	35	12	19	5	11	2	5	56	-	60	(49)	36	49	25	39
Sri Lanka	93	104	86	102	35	66	35	69	2	4	94	97	73	99	89	93	101	106
Indonesia	72	118	65	115	12	46	7	43	1	-	67	78	89	99	84	-	59	79
Afghanistan	16	-	5	-	2	-	1	-	0	-	64	-	71	(63)	16	-	16	-
Myanmar	71	-	65	100	15	-	11	-	1	-	39	-	58	(27)	89	-	65	-
Cambodia	77	-	56	-	9	-	4	-	1	-	-	-	-	(50)	70	-	43	-
Viet Nam	-	102	-	99	1	42	-	40	-	-	-	-	-	(50)	-	-	-	-
Philippines	113	106	111	106	41	68	40	69	19	28	-	82	-	76	-	97	96	-
Papua New Guinea	44	70	35	64	4	12	2	9	-	2	76	-	84	(67)	57	79	37	57
Thailand	78	95	74	-	14	28	11	-	2	16	71	-	69	(64)	88	-	69	-
Malaysia	90	102	84	102	28	59	22	59	2	7	-	100	-	99	88	95	69	98
Rep. of Korea	101	101	99	101	35	88	25	86	6	36	96	100	96	99	92	94	65	87
Iran (Islamic Rep. of)	63	114	40	105	18	48	11	39	2	5	75	79	74	99	55	80	49	68
Singapore	105	111	100	110	45	69	41	70	10	-	99	-	99	(95)	88	-	103	-
Hong Kong	103	106	99	105	29	74	25	76	5	-	94	-	92	(98)	98	92	74	104
New Zealand	106	107	104	106	75	85	74	86	15	36	-	98	-	98	94	95	94	98
Australia	99	106	99	105	62	98	61	99	16	29	-	97	-	94	94	95	91	98
Japan	100	102	100	102	82	96	81	97	13	28	100	100	100	100	96	95	101	99

Source: World Bank, World Development Report 1990, tables 29 and 32; 1991, tables 29 and 32; UNDP, Human Development Report 1990, table 14.

Notes: Figures in italics are for years other than those specified.

w: weighted average. Figures in parentheses refer to both sexes, in 1985-1987.

Although it is difficult to identify all the potential benefits of schooling for development because they are so diverse and operate through many different mechanisms, it is generally agreed that primary schooling of less than four years is largely wasted because it does not lead to functional literacy. Therefore particular concern must be expressed about the efficiency of educational investments in countries where the proportion of pupils starting out in Grade 1 who complete Grade 4 is low. The data presented in table 1 show that the countries in South Asia performed very poorly in this regard around 1970. Unfortunately, recent data are not available for most of these countries, but the figure given for Bangladeshi males in 1987 is not encouraging. The effects of poverty cannot be readily disentangled from those of rapid population growth in explaining continued deficiencies in school systems, but the two factors are obviously closely related; it is precisely in the poorest countries that the demographic obstacle to the expansion and upgrading of school systems tends to be the most severe (Jones, 1990: 11-12).

The Asian region provides examples of countries at most stages of fertility transition. In countries such as Afghanistan, Nepal and Pakistan, the age structure is such, and fertility levels so high, that a massive increase in the numbers of school-age children can be confidently forecast for at least another two decades. In other countries, including Bangladesh, India, the Philippines and Viet Nam, fertility has declined to some extent but the school-age population continues to grow. In others, where fertility decline has been substantial, the primary school-age population has actually ceased to grow, or will soon do so. It is worth listing these countries and areas, and the approximate year in which the growth of their primary school-age population ceased:[1/](#)

Singapore	1968
Republic of Korea	1972
Hong Kong	1972
Taiwan Province of China	1972
China	1980
Thailand	1985
Indonesia	1987
Sri Lanka	1990

In these countries and areas, the demographic obstacle to raising enrolment rates and improving the quality of education has been removed. Interestingly, in a number of them (for example, Singapore in 1968 and Thailand in 1985), the cessation in growth of the primary school-age population occurred more or less simultaneously with the achievement of universal primary education, thus removing both factors hitherto necessitating expansion of school places. Even this satisfactory conjunction of events left in place other factors requiring further increases in educational budgets: some residual growth of the secondary school-age population, and the need for further enrolment rate increases at secondary and tertiary levels of education, which are both much more expensive per pupil than primary education (Jones, 1990: 36-40). But this represented an unequivocal investment in human resources development, not an expenditure of resources to stay on the treadmill of servicing a proportion of the rising numbers of children of primary school age.

Unfortunately, in some other parts of Asia, there is no immediate prospect for the rapid upgrading in educational quality which was facilitated in countries such as Singapore and Thailand by the twin impact of cessation of growth of the school-age population and achievement of universal primary education. It is forecast that in middle South Asia (mainly the countries of the Indian subcontinent), the population aged 6-11 will increase by 15 per cent between 1985 and the end of the century; the primary school enrolment rate already reached by 1985 was 63 per cent (Jones, 1990: 40). This region faces an uphill task in improving the coverage and quality of its educational systems.

Higher rather than lower rates of population growth can be viewed either as a factor raising the cost of attaining given educational targets, or as one stretching out the time period in which such targets can be reached if a ceiling is placed on expenditure. Viewed somewhat differently, a decline in fertility will have an impact in reducing the number of school enrolments needed to meet targets for proportions of children enrolled in school: the impact will be limited up to about 10 years after the decline sets in, but it will escalate and reach very significant proportions within 20 years (Jones, 1975, 1976).

The most likely effect of a slower expansion in the coverage of primary education as a result of rapid growth in the number of potential pupils is that schools in poor and isolated or inaccessible areas will not be upgraded or new ones built. At the same time, it is the wealthy and the privileged who have most to gain from the expansion of the upper levels of the educational system. Thus delays in achieving universal primary education, or in improving the quality of primary education, especially in the rural areas, owing to rapid population growth, may be a factor reinforcing the inequalities in the society. This may be especially so with regard to access to better-paying jobs, for which education serves as a screening device.

Even a Government which tries to channel its limited resources for human resources development towards poor and disadvantaged groups may well favour the politically more visible urban poor, and therefore under-invest in rural education. The Medium-term Philippine Development Plan for 1990-1992 recognized that this was a factor contributing to the urban drift of the population.

Demographic trends can also influence the demand for education at the family level. High fertility and poverty limit the capacity of families to incur the expenses needed to school their children. A study on Thailand and the Republic of Korea shows that fertility decline and associated smaller family size has led to increased availability of adult time per child and an increased level of per capita disposable income. This increased availability of resources has led families to invest more in education per school-age child. This effect is likely to be strengthened over time, as the number of adults per child in households continues to rise over the next two decades (Mason, 1992). The macro-level effect of high fertility on the availability and quality of education is also likely in turn to affect the family-level



motivation to educate family members.

#### The special role of female education

Female education may be particularly important for speeding the path to faster economic growth and improvement in human capital. Female education is important in the following:

- Lowering infant mortality (see Caldwell, 1986)
- The quality of child-rearing
- Increasing the likelihood that a woman will work outside the home<sup>2/</sup>
- Increasing the use of family planning and hastening fertility decline (Cochrane, 1979; Caldwell, 1980)

Some of the studies demonstrating the positive effect of female education are flawed in that they are based on small numbers of women with upper secondary and higher education, normally drawn from the wealthier classes. In these studies, the apparent benefits of education could therefore really be an effect of social class, and as more women achieve these levels of education, the relationship could change. Even so, the evidence for major effects of female education seems incontestable.

One corollary is that countries which have failed to achieve very high levels of female education are seriously damaging their prospects for economic and social development. The recent five-year plans of Bangladesh and Pakistan recognize this, and give detailed attention to women's issues. The third five-year plan of Bangladesh (1985-1990) spelled out clearly the objectives and strategies for women's development, and incorporated a number of specific programmes, including the establishment of women's cooperatives, mothers' centres and vocational training programmes for women (Ahmed and Mabud, 1989). The sixth five-year plan of Pakistan (1983-1988) stated "The Plan candidly recognizes that no society can ever develop half-liberated and half-shackled. It provides in each sector of economic activity development programmes to integrate women and their concerns in the mainstream of social and economic life".

#### Dynamics of education and labour force interaction

Demographic factors are very important in the growth of the labour force. This growth is fuelled by the ever-increasing size of younger cohorts in many countries. A decline in fertility leads to a slackening of entrants into the labour force after around a 15-year lag. This does not have much immediate impact on the overall growth of the labour force, but it greatly affects its age structure.

Table 2: Projections of growth of labour-force age groups: Asia (1990=100)

<b>Asia</b>					
<b>Age group</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2020</b>	
15-19	100	101	120	118	
20-24	100	99	117	128	
25-29	100	121	123	147	
15-29	100	106	120	130	
30-44	100	133	156	167	
45-64	100	131	179	235	
All ages 15-64	100	120	144	165	
<u>Ratio: Population 15-29</u>					
30-64	.88	.71	.64	.58	
<b>Pakistan</b>					
15-19	100	159	196	205	
20-24	100	120	197	216	
25-29	100	121	199	245	
15-29	100	135	197	221	
30-44	100	141	181	227	
45-64	100	126	194	272	
All ages 15-64	100	135	192	248	
<u>Ratio: Population 15-29</u>					
30-64	1.00	1.01	1.07	.81	
<b>Indonesia</b>					
15-19	100	104	111	101	

20-24	100	116	121	125
25-29	100	133	139	149
15-29	100	116	122	123
30-44	100	139	177	192
45-64	100	126	174	244
All ages 15-64	100	125	150	170
<u>Ratio: Population 15-29</u>				
30-64	.94	.82	.65	.54

Note: "Medium" variant used for later years in all cases.

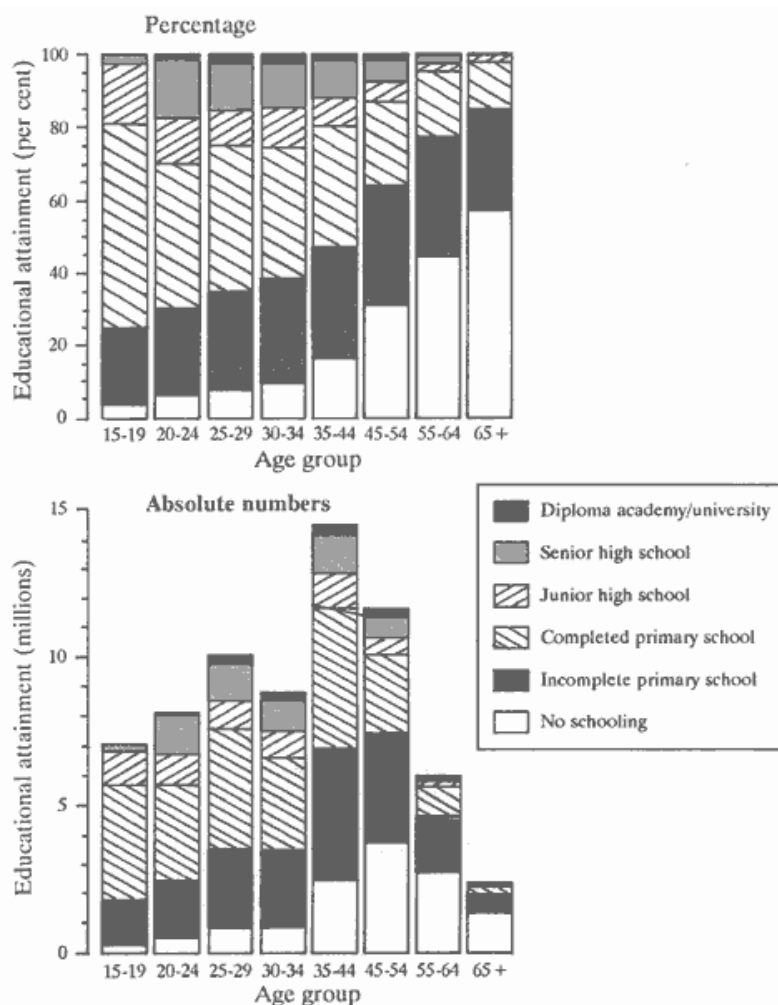
Table 2 shows the projected growth of the labour-force age groups in Asia from 1990 to 2020. The population aged 15-29 is expected to grow much more slowly than the population aged 30-44 which in turn, after the year 2000, is expected to be outpaced by the population aged 45-64. The ratio of the population aged 15-29 to 30-64 is expected to fall steadily over the entire period; in other words, there will be an ageing within the labour-force age groups.

To illustrate the diversity of demographic trends within Asia, the projections for Indonesia and Pakistan are presented in table 2. Labour-force growth trajectories differ greatly between these two countries, partly because of differences in the base-year age structure (largely due to different fertility trajectories over the 1970s and 1980s), and partly because of differences in initial fertility levels and expected trends. In Pakistan, over the decade of the 1990s, there will be little difference in the growth rates of the population aged 15-29 and 32-64; both will grow very rapidly, resulting in a 35 per cent increase over the decade. During the first decade of the twenty-first century, growth of all age segments of the labour force will continue to be very rapid, and it is only in the decade 2010-2020 that, according to the assumptions used in the projections, the growth of the youngest age groups within the labour force will begin to slacken.

In Indonesia, the picture is very different. Because of earlier declines in fertility, there will be only slight increases in the numbers aged 15-29 after the year 2000. Above these ages, however, the working-age population will continue to grow rapidly. Over the 30-year period 1990-2020, the population aged 15-29 will grow by 23 per cent in Indonesia, compared with 121 per cent in Pakistan; the working-age population as a whole will grow by 70 per cent in Indonesia, compared with 148 per cent in Pakistan. By the year 2010, the ratio of the young (15-29) segment of the working-age population to the older segment will have declined to 0.65 in Indonesia, but will be as high as 1.07 in Pakistan. Indonesia thus illustrates the situation that will be experienced by many Asian countries with declining fertility; the growth of the working-age population will slacken, and there will be significant ageing within the working-age population. However, the dependency ratio in these countries will continue to decline over the entire period covered by these projections.

The extent to which these trends in the size of the working-age population will translate into growth of the labour force depends on trends in labour-force participation rates by age and sex. For males, development is typically accompanied by some decline in participation rates at the very young and very old ages, owing to educational expansion and an increase in the proportion of workers subject to formal retirement ages. The more significant trends tend to be those among females, whose participation rates can change sharply over a shorter period. Most censuses and surveys understate the extent of female participation in the labour force (see Anker and others, 1987). However, even using a particular definition and set of procedures in measuring female work, participation rates can change substantially over time. It has been observed that over the 1970s, female participation rates in urban areas of South-East and East Asia tended to rise (Jones, 1984: 24-32), and this rise continued in at least some of these countries over the 1980s. Many factors may have contributed to this: changes in the labour market favouring occupations in which women are traditionally employed; improvements in female education, enabling them to enter occupations requiring secondary and tertiary education; changes in the sex stereotyping of occupations; changes in economic circumstances or perceived household needs putting greater pressure on some women to enter the labour force; and decline in fertility levels, lowering the proportion of women who have young children to care for at any given time.

The educational composition of the labour force has been changing sharply in most Asian countries, owing to the educational advances already discussed. The figure shows changes in the educational composition of the Indonesian labour force by age. There are clearly major differences in the educational level and literacy of the younger groups within the labour force compared with older workers.



Source: Jones and Manning, 1992.

Trends in the age and educational composition of the labour force measured nationally may not hold at the regional or district level; at these levels, migration may play a major role in modifying national trends. For example, high rates of rural-urban migration, which tend to be concentrated among the young and to some extent among the better educated, can lead to the depletion of young, educated workers in many rural areas, and disproportionate representation of such workers within urban and particularly metropolitan areas. There are differences of opinion over how serious such trends are for national development, or indeed whether they are serious at all. It is sometimes argued that labour productivity is higher in metropolitan areas, and therefore the movement of workers into these areas leads to higher aggregate national output than would have been achieved if they had remained elsewhere (Gilbert and Gugler, 1982). On the other hand, there are biases leading to higher measured productivity in metropolitan areas, and the loss of the "best and brightest" from rural areas can seriously retard rural development and weaken social cohesion in these areas.

Countries with high fertility and ever-increasing numbers of young people tend to do less well in raising the educational attainment of successive cohorts than do countries with less rapid growth. But for most countries, the trends shown in the figure for Indonesia hold to a greater or lesser degree. In terms of manpower planning and human resources development, it is important to recognize that the more or less stationary numbers of young people entering the labour force in lower fertility countries obscures two important trends: a rapid decline in the number of uneducated young labour-force entrants, and a rapid increase in the number of well-educated young labour-force entrants. This has important implications for policy. Leibenstein (1971) argued that there was an advantage to higher fertility levels in that such levels led to a more rapid replacement of older, more poorly educated workers with younger, better educated workers. Jones (1976:574-579) countered this on three grounds: first, the extreme youthfulness of any high-fertility-base population ensures the rapid replacement of the bulk of the existing labour force irrespective of the fertility trajectory; second, the educational composition of each cohort entering the workforce is lowered for some time by the delayed entry into the workforce of young people who stay longer in school; third, the rapid growth in the number of young people is likely to retard the increases in school enrolment rates and subsequent educational attainments of these groups.

In any event, in most Asian countries, the history of educational expansion is such that the better-educated workers

are heavily concentrated among the younger age groups and the uneducated workers among the older age groups. This has important implications for manpower planning, given the relative immobility (both geographical and occupational) of older workers and the particular difficulty of retraining uneducated workers if they are already in middle age.

#### Rising educational levels of workers: implications for productivity and occupational structure

In the labour market conditions prevailing in many Asian countries today, irrespective of whether the arguments of Leibenstein or Jones have more validity, a major issue being faced is the projected rapid expansion in the number of workers with high levels of education, an expansion likely to outstrip the growth in employment opportunities in the occupations into which such workers traditionally moved. For example, recent projections for Indonesia (Jones, 1992, table 8.7) indicate the likelihood of the following average annual rates of increase of the "potential workforce" (aged 20-64) by educational level:

	1985-1995	1995-2000
None or primary	1.2	0.6
Lower secondary	6.5	5.3
Upper secondary	7.5	6.5
Tertiary	13.6	10.5

Such differentials in the growth of different segments of the workforce are likely to continue to exist for some time, because of the following important rigidities in the production of educated workers, associated with the dynamics of labour-force growth in youthful populations (that is, populations in which each successive birth cohort is substantially larger than the cohort which precedes it). First, the better-educated cohorts produced as a result of the expansion of the education system remain in the labour force for decades, and continue to raise its average educational level as they succeed older, more poorly educated cohorts. Second, production of the educated is subject to a 'ratchet effect': once an expansion of capacity has been achieved, there is a built-in tendency to utilize, and indeed to expand, that capacity, reinforced by: (1) the dynamics of the progression of cohorts of pupils through the school system and into higher education; and (2) the non-labour market sources of demand for higher education. Planners thus cannot readily adjust the stream of educated young people entering the labour market to the perceived requirements of the labour market as if they were turning on a tap.

Professional, managerial and clerical occupations have played a major role in the past in providing employment for Indonesian workers with upper secondary and tertiary education, they employ half of all workers with senior high school education, and more than four-fifths of all workers with tertiary education. Although employment in these occupations has increased more rapidly than employment as a whole over the period 1971-1985, there is little prospect that its growth from now on can match the growth of the labour force with these levels of education. Therefore there will have to be either a "pushdown" of such workers into less prestigious occupations in which few of them have been employed in the past, or a rise in unemployment rates among the educated. Objective evidence for an oversupply of educated job-seekers would be a narrowing of wage differentials between the better- and less-educated, perhaps along with rising levels of unemployment for the better-educated. There is evidence of both of these in recent years (Jones, 1992).

These symptoms of oversupply of educated workers may in themselves contain the elements for a rectification of the situation. Evidence of high graduate unemployment and narrower wage differentials may discourage many young people from continuing their studies. A lessened wage premium on educated manpower should also foster structural changes in favour of sectors which utilize such manpower, for example certain export-oriented industries. But it would be overly sanguine to assume that the market will take care of everything. For one thing, institutional rigidities may be built in through the adoption of a minimum school-leaving age; for another, many potential adjustments take time and others may take socially perverse forms, such as the decision of the young educated, disappointed in their job prospects, to seek ever higher levels of education in the hope that this will give them a competitive edge.

While "over-skilling" may have unfortunate consequences for worker attitudes, there may be offsetting productivity benefits from having workers do jobs for which they are in some sense overqualified. Certainly, the better educated are much more widely spread through the occupational structure in the industrialized countries than they are in South and South-East Asia.

#### Population trends, nutrition, health and family planning

Factors determining the health of a country are numerous and more complex than those determining the levels of education and training (ESCAP 1992: 10-11). Apart from the nutritional, social and economic factors, demographic factors are believed to have considerable implications for health. Rapid population growth and its consequences on the population size, age-sex composition and geographic distribution of the population will impinge on the availability of health services. The size of the population in relation to the available food, shelter and resources



determines the degree to which a society can cope with the population's demand for basic needs, which in turn determines health. The age and sex composition of a population also influences the overall incidence of sickness,<sup>3/</sup> the specific types of health problems and demand for specific health services. At the household level, reproductive factors, such as parity and birth interval, are related to health, especially of the mother. For example, high parity implies more births at an older age and at closer intervals, which can affect the health of the children of the household adversely by prematurely interrupting breast-feeding, and reducing food supplementation and child-care time. Close birth intervals could also compromise maternal nutritional status during pregnancy.

High mortality and morbidity levels have unequivocally serious welfare implications, by shortening the life-span and detracting from people's enjoyment of life. From a productivity standpoint also high mortality levels have a number of serious implications: wasted investment in an individual when premature death intervenes; perhaps more fatalism and lack of forward planning because of the tenuousness of life; and higher levels of ill-health, which weaken people and make them less productive workers. Anemia and a high number of parasite infestations are chronic problems among many of the poorer segments of the population of Asia.

Efforts to reduce mortality levels will therefore make a major contribution to human resources development. But they also lead to faster population growth, which poses problems for human resources development. The way out of this dilemma is to combine efforts to improve health and lower mortality with efforts to lower fertility, so that a balance is established at low rates of population growth.

Countries in Asia are at varying points along the "epidemiological transition". Those in the early stages of the transition are characterized by high mortality due to infectious and parasitic diseases as well as to "other and unknown" causes of death. A "triad" of malnutrition, diarrhoea and lower respiratory tract infection frequently combine synergistically to lead to the onset of the fatal combination of dehydration and pneumonia. These countries show a far higher mortality rate due to diseases of infancy and maternal causes than do developing countries as a whole (Hakulinen and others, 1986). For countries much further through the epidemiological transition, neoplasms and diseases of the circulatory system take over as the main killers, but these are killers of the elderly, not of infants and young children.

Many things apart from programmes conducted by Ministries of Health affect the health of a population; indeed, government health expenditure per se appeared in the past to have very little to do with national health conditions (Mosley, 1983; Mensch and others, 1985). Levels of economic development are important, but at any given level of development, factors such as egalitarianism and the level of popular participation in political change, women's autonomy and educational levels can make an enormous difference (Caldwell, 1986). As good health is one of the most basic elements in an individual's quality of life there is, at the very least, a latent demand for health care which can be fostered through information and awareness campaigns and allowed, in turn, to influence the strategies for the provision of health services.

Primary health care approaches, central to which is the use of village health workers to serve as a bridge between the formal health-care system and the community, have become increasingly accepted and promoted as a means of better meeting the health care needs of developing countries (Bennett, 1979). The key innovation in the primary health care approach is the recognition that most of the causes of death and disability in developing countries can best be countered through heightened awareness of hygiene and sanitation, improved nutrition, improved prenatal care and simple treatments (such as oral rehydration for diarrhoeal disease) which can be performed without the intervention of medical personnel, and other treatments which can be performed almost as effectively and at much less cost by personnel with limited training. These personnel serve to screen patients to ensure that only those who need it gain access to the high technology, high-cost, physician- and hospital-based services.

Family planning programmes, if effectively oriented to lowering the incidence of high-risk pregnancies (that is, higher-order births and those with short birth intervals) will reduce both infant and maternal mortality among these groups (Trussell, 1988). This may not reduce overall infant mortality levels, because a declining incidence of higher-order births means a rise in the proportion of first births, which are also high-risk births (Bongaarts, 1987). But in lowering birth rates, the family planning programmes should enable available health services to deal more effectively with the health-care needs of the smaller number of births, reduce the number of children to be cared for in the average home and alter the social composition of birth cohorts, all factors tending to lower mortality.

## Conclusions

There are important synergies in human resources development. For example, improved health results in less absenteeism of pupils and teachers, and the consequent improvement in education fosters further improvement in health. Effective control of diarrhoeal disease enables better nutrition to be derived from a given food intake, improving the body's ability to combat further diarrhoeal episodes. Improved education of women will improve the health of the next generation of children.

The role of population growth as a barrier to more rapid and comprehensive human resources development is

important, but should not be exaggerated. In developing countries as a whole, military expenditure each year is larger than educational and health expenditure combined (UNDP, 1990, table 18), and a vast multiple of family planning expenditure. Diversion of even a small part of the military budget to human resources development would allow much more rapid progress to be made. The modification of population trends in the interest of more rapid human resources development will almost certainly require a number of concurrent institutional and societal-level changes that will facilitate both the demographic changes and the improvements in human resources development.

It is important to recognize that, in their dual roles as both the object and a key instrument of development, people must be central in development planning. The aim must be to build on the many points of mutual reinforcement between private decisions seeking to maximize individual and family welfare and planning decisions seeking to maximize aggregate welfare. Happily, there are many such points of mutual reinforcement in the area of human resources development; the personal benefits derived from human resources development programmes lead to individual actions which promote further human resources development.

#### Footnotes

1. These years have been calculated from the latest detailed United Nations population analyses and projections. See United Nations, 1991a and 1991b.
2. Actually, labour-force participation rates for females in many countries are lower for those with completed primary and junior high school than for the uneducated, but with completed secondary and higher education, the rates usually reach their maximum.
3. Infants, children and the elderly are the groups of population at a high risk of sickness: other things being equal, the larger the proportion of these groups, the higher the incidence of sickness.

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## Implications of Changing Family Structures on Old-age Support in the ESCAP Region

By Tan Poo Chang \*

\* The author of this article is Associate Professor, Faculty of Economics and Administration, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. It was originally prepared as the special paper entitled "Implications of Changing Family Structures on Old-age Support in the ESCAP Region" for the Fourth Asian and Pacific Population Conference, which will be held in Bali, Indonesia, from 19 to 27 August 1992.

Families alone do not have the capacity to provide the care and support for the increasing number of elderly persons

Population ageing is a major by-product of the demographic transition which has occurred in most areas of the world. In the developed countries, where the demographic transition started earlier, the elderly population already forms a significant proportion of the total population. In the developing countries, ageing issues have only recently begun to emerge as a cause of concern. This is because ageing is a macro view of an entire population and the proportion and number of older persons in most of these countries are still quite low. However, in the coming decades, population ageing will occur over a large part of Asia and the Pacific. Asia will have the majority of the world's elderly population, comprising 51 per cent of the world total and 86 per cent of the total elderly population in the less developed countries in the year 2000 (Kuroda, 1991: 89-90). This is a substantially large number in absolute terms as the total elderly population (65 years of age and over) is expected to be 426 million in the year 2000. In relative terms, however, the elderly will make up only 5.7 per cent of Asia's population compared with 13.2 per cent in the more developed regions (Kuroda, 1989: 47).

It is pertinent to note that the tempo and the size of the elderly population vary considerably across countries in contrastingly different stages of socio-economic development, and social and cultural systems. While some societies are already ageing with rapid fertility reduction, others still have fairly youthful populations. For example, on the one hand, in Japan and Hong Kong, 10 per cent or more of their populations will be 65 or more years of age in the year 2000 (Concepcion, 1987: table 1). On the other hand, countries such as Singapore, China, the Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka and Malaysia will achieve the 10 per cent level only in or before 2025. India, the other demographic giant, is projected to have an elderly population of 8.5 per cent in the year 2025.

In view of the wide diversity of cultures and stages of development as well as the disparity in the ageing process, not to mention differences within each country, this article will focus more on the Asian region. However, where possible, reference will also be made to the Pacific countries. It is relevant to point out that in mid-1992, out of a population of almost 3.2 billion in the ESCAP region, the Pacific countries accounted for only about 0.9 per cent of the population (ESCAP, 1992; table 1). There is also a wide variation in population ageing across countries; for example, in the advanced Western countries of Australia and New Zealand more than 7 per cent of their populations are 70 or more years of age, compared with 1-2 per cent for countries such as Fiji and Papua New Guinea.

### Significance of ageing issues in the twenty-first century

As highlighted above, Asia will have the majority of the world's elderly population and hence it is a region where attention should be focused. In addition, the number of elderly persons will be substantial, about 216 million in the year 2000. The tempo of ageing, however, differs greatly across different parts of Asia; it is much faster and on a larger scale in a number of countries in East Asia compared with South-East, South or West Asia (Kuroda, 1991: 90-91).

The ageing process is expected to accelerate in the next century, mainly because the large cohorts from the post-Second World War "baby boom" will be joining the ranks of those 65 or more years of age during this period. The decline in mortality, particularly among those at young ages, that occurred after the War also means that a higher proportion of the large cohorts would survive to old age. With increasing life expectancy, as many as 25 per cent or more of those aged 65 years and over will be "old old" (that is 75 years of age or older) in the year 2000, and this is projected to follow an upward trend for the majority of the Asian countries (Concepcion, 1987: 23-25).

Unlike in the developed countries, population ageing will occur under less modernized and in under-developed economies in Asia. Also, in this region, a much larger number of families live under the poverty line or do not have adequate housing, and the majority of the elderly population are in the rural areas where poverty is a serious problem.

Coupled with the demographic changes are the social and economic changes sweeping across most parts of the world, in particular Asia and the Pacific. Consequently, profound changes in family structures have

occurred in this region for a number of reasons, with serious implications for old-age support.

Firstly, the family has traditionally been the main source of support and provider of care for the old, and changes in the structures of the family may not automatically provide for such old-age support. Secondly, the number of elderly persons is much larger than in the past and the elderly make different demands and have different values from the younger generation, partly because of modernization and increasing education. Thirdly, the quality of care and support and the demand in terms of time and financial resources are likely to be higher because of a longer life-span into old age. This also means that there will be a higher proportion of very old persons, which is likely to result in an increasing number of older people suffering from dementia and other chronic diseases where long-term medical and intensive care would be required.

Hence, it is appropriate that this article explore the implications of changes in family structures on old-age care and support, as many countries cannot afford the costly investments in institutional care, which otherwise would be necessary to cater to the burgeoning number of elderly people in Asia and the Pacific.

#### Types of old-age support and care

Old-age support and care which can be provided by the family may be simplified into three categories: physical, social and economic. Physical support is required only when the elderly person is ill and/or is too frail and weak to attend to himself or herself. Such a function may be provided by the spouse or any member of the family, either with or without external support, at home, or in institutions if constant medical attention is required. Social support from the family comes through the conjugal relationship as well as through adult children, although the former is likely to be more important for men than women. This is because men 65 or more years of age are more likely to be married -- usually to younger women -- whereas women are more likely to be widowed. In fact, evidence from a 1984 Malaysian survey confirmed that elderly women were more likely to live in extended families of their children's while elderly men were more likely to remain in their own nuclear families (Hamid et al., 1989: 21).

Economic support comes from pension or insurance schemes which are likely to cover only a very small proportion of the elderly population in most developing countries, and mainly those living in urban areas. For example, it was estimated that in 1985, the old-age pension plans, which cover government employees, state enterprise and private enterprise employees, benefitted only about 7 per cent of the elderly aged 60 and over in Thailand, and mainly those living in the urban areas (Kiranandana et al., 1988). In the Republic of Korea, only 1.2 per cent of the retired elderly (55 or more years of age) received benefits from the retirement pension system in 1990 (Ehn and Jung, 1991: 62). This is also true of provident funds which cover only workers in the formal sector; they are paid out in a lump-sum upon retirement, and are usually inadequate and quickly spent. Most elderly persons, therefore, work to advanced ages and depend almost entirely upon family support during their later years. This is common among families in the Asian region such as in Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar and Thailand (Concepcion, 1987: 28-29). The care and support provided to parents are usually in the form of shared housing, food and other necessities and less often in the form of direct transfer of income. These transfers or remittances are, however, more likely for those children who live apart from their parents or who have migrated.

An important point to note is that living arrangements are not indicative of the care and support that is received by parents. For example, living in an extended family system with one's children is no guarantee that adequate care is being provided, and living independently does not mean that one's needs are not being met by family members. Evidence indicates that family members are still important in providing emotional support and care to elderly persons living alone or away from their family members (see, for example, Ehn, 1987: 44; Florentina, 1991: 36; Cai, 1991: 123-125; Kendig, 1987: 76).

#### Implications of changing family structures

There is a wide variety of family forms in Asia's diverse cultures, perhaps with more variations now than in the past. Demographic change has altered membership of families in terms of the numbers, types and characteristics of kin, both within and across generations, and also in the age structure. Despite that, the family forms the basic institution around which societies organize themselves. Changes in family structures would, therefore, affect the care and support of the elderly.

Traditionally, it was not uncommon to find households with more than two generations headed by the oldest male person. In such a family structure, the older persons had enormous authority and power over family members through control of family productive resources, such as the family enterprise or land. Even then, there were wide variations in the family systems, with some systems tending to favour males, and others, females, and hence some disparities in their care and support during old age (Mason, 1991: 97-98). Whatever the family system, it is generally believed that the elderly were treated with reverence, and were



cared for and had a place within the family. Today, under the nuclear type family structure, which is becoming more common, elderly persons have practically little or no role or authority over the children's "new families". While they may still maintain authority in their original households, age may force such authority to be passed on to the next generation, particularly in the running of the family business. In such a situation, care of the elderly persons is not automatically provided for. It may also result in increasing isolation of the elderly from major social activities (Concepcion, 1987: 29). This is particularly so if the elderly person lives alone and there is an increasing tendency for this to occur. Primary or single-person households are becoming more apparent in China, Hong Kong, Japan and the Republic of Korea. For example, in Japan, the number of such households rose from 5 per cent in 1960 to 21 per cent in 1985 (United Nations, 1991: 7).

The impact on and reactions of family structures to development and modernization vary considerably across cultures. The present family structure, however, depends also on its traditional family system. Nevertheless, it would still be possible to identify the major changes in family structures which have profound effects on the care and support of the elderly. The implications for ageing would be looked at from two perspectives: in relation to the present generation of elderly as well as when today's younger generation advances in age.

### Industrialization, urbanization and migration

One of the most fundamental of changes occurring as a result of industrialization in Asia is the shift in the economy from family enterprises to wage employment (Goode, 1963). Consequently, the authority that family elders traditionally had over younger family members through control of key productive resources has become less important, as young men and women can obtain alternative means of employment elsewhere, such as in factories or offices. The loyalty and obedience of the young, which is closely attached to the control of such resources by the elders, is therefore reduced, to the detriment of the care and support which had been offered during old age. The evidence in Japan, however, shows that it has retained many elements of traditional family life despite its advanced urban economy, which provides public income support for the elderly.

Urbanization and population growth have also reduced the proportion of families who have control over such productive resources. The shift from an informal to a formal economy is likely to reduce opportunities for productive work among the elderly. Hence, resources tend to shift from the hands of the parents to the younger generation, partly also as a result of increasing educational achievement, which again would result in care and support being less consistent or less certain later in life.

Increasing education, urbanization and industrialization have resulted in more women engaging in wage employment outside the home. For example, the female labour force participation rate in Singapore increased from 44 per cent in 1980 to 50 per cent in 1990 (Lee and Veloo, 1991: 66). In Japan, the female labour force participation rate rose from 55.2 per cent in 1965 to 58.2 per cent in 1984 for those aged 25-44 years and from 58.4 per cent to 64.1 per cent for those aged 45-54 years over the same period (Ogawa, 1987: 63). Increased female employment outside the home, however, means that less labour is available to provide care for both the young and old in the household. The nature of work is also less flexible and less compatible with the care of those at home, unlike the informal and unpaid family work in which they may have been engaged in the past.

Increased female labour force participation may undermine intergenerational co-residence. However, this need not be an inevitable result as elderly parents are now playing an increasingly important role in minding the grandchildren when the young couple is at work. The difficulty of employing and being able to afford reliable help also means that greater reliance is now placed on elderly parents to co-reside with their children and provide them with necessary help and support. In this situation, therefore, there is reciprocal care and support across generations. This scenario, however, may not always take place if migration has physically separated the generations. In certain housing arrangements, especially those in urban dwellings where space is limited, there may also not be sufficient space for such an extended family to be set up. Families may still live fairly close by in separate living quarters, and provide help and assistance to one another. The likelihood of this happening will diminish with the rising cost of living, increasing development and urbanization. It is reported that in the West, such as in Australia, older couples prefer to live separately in their own dwellings but they maintain strong and close bonds and contacts with their children and grandchildren through the widespread use of modern means of communication such as the telephone, road and air transport (Kendig, 1987: 76).

Rural-urban and international migration among the young also reduces the availability of physical support for the elderly, particularly when young women are engaged in autonomous moves. Among others, studies from the Philippines indicate that migrants were mainly female and their increasing labour force

participation resulted in a loss of potential care-givers to the family (Cruz and Obcena, 1991: 55). Financial support in terms of remittances may decline with time or not be forthcoming owing to the high cost of living in the urban areas or the loss of emotional ties between parents and children as the period of absence lengthens. Some parents may eventually join their children, but being already set in their ways and wary of new surroundings, they may find it difficult to adjust to the demands of urban living and the new values of their children and grandchildren.

Increasing rural-urban migration has resulted in the development of squatters and shanty towns next to urban conglomerates in many parts of Asia. Such squatters and shanty towns develop mainly because of the inability of families to afford proper housing facilities in urban centres. The economic condition of families living in such an environment usually means that they cannot provide adequately for the care and support of the young, let alone those who are frail and old, as the former (the future) tend to be given preference in the application of resources over the latter (the past).

#### Changing marriage patterns

Concomitant with the rise in education is delayed age at first marriage. As couples delay their marriage they also delay child-bearing until relatively late in life, which means that when they themselves are elderly, they will still have to support their fairly young children. The resources committed to investments in children's schooling, and health and nutrition of the younger generations, would mean less would be available to care for themselves and for the elderly, which becomes increasingly serious as their needs consequently become greater and their earnings diminish. It is quite likely that family decisions may relegate the needs of the elderly to a low priority, particularly since, with an increasing life-span, the family may have to cope with more than one generation of elderly persons.

The delayed age at first marriage and increase in educational level have also given young persons freedom to choose their own marriage partners, instead of being "match-made" by their parents as was traditionally done. This means that the couple has more say in family decisions, is less reliant on family resources, and is more likely to establish its own nuclear family. This situation, however, need not imply a weakening of support for the elderly. The relationship between parents and children is now based more on affection and filial piety. The difference is that, unlike previously, the elderly parents are not guaranteed a home with their children. Fortunately, in Asia, the indication is that the norms of filial piety remain strong despite rapid industrialization, and most elderly parents do find a home with one of their children. The ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations) ageing surveys conducted in 1986 in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore found that over 70 per cent of male and female elderly lived with children (Chen and Jones, 1989: 46). Studies carried out in Taiwan Province of China and Hong Kong in the 1980s also indicate that the majority of elderly parents lived with children (Hui, 1987: 86). A 1984 World Health Organization study covering Fiji, Malaysia, the Philippines and the Republic of Korea found that 70-80 per cent of the older people lived with their children (Andrews et al., 1986). The above conclusion may be somewhat biased considering that these and many other studies are household-based and they do not include elderly persons who are homeless or who live in old-folks' homes.

There is also a rising proportion of people not marrying, particularly among the educated in urban areas. The implication in relation to their care during old age will become an important issue as, unlike those who are married, they do not have children to fall back on for support. A few may be fortunate enough to have the support of their nephews and nieces. However, as it is, these children are already facing problems coping with their own immediate elderly parents and grandparents and perhaps even great-grandparents.

#### Declining fertility and mortality

Fertility has been declining in most parts of Asia as a result of urbanization, rising level of education, increased age at marriage and more widespread practice of family planning. The consequent decline in family size has, to some extent, been offset by lower mortality levels, but it means that parents now have fewer children to depend on. It also means that there are fewer adult children to share in the care and support of elderly parents. As fertility continues to decline, the situation will become more serious. In some parts of Asia, where fertility is fairly low and reaching or falling below replacement level, there is already evidence of this occurring. An example is Singapore, where the total fertility rate is below 2.0 and the age pyramid is expected to reach the rectangular form by the year 2000 (Chen and Jones, 1989: 7-20). Another example is Japan, where it is expected that there will be one elderly person (65 or more years of age) to one child in the year 2000 (Kuroda, 1989: 47).

On the other hand, with increased life expectancy, individuals are likely to enter old age with more of their own age peers: spouses, siblings and friends. Therefore, they will be able to reciprocate support and companionship and share life-long ties with each other. The unfortunate reality is that this is merely a

postponement until later in life, where those who survive at the oldest ages are likely to be disabled widows. In most of the countries and areas in Asia, with the exception of the Republic of Korea, the sex ratios of the elderly population for 1980 indicate a dominance of males over females. By the year 2000, the projected sex ratios indicate a preponderance of females at older ages, with the exception of Hong Kong (111), Bangladesh (103) and India (103) (Concepcion, 1987: 25-27).

The reduction in family size initially in the demographic transition increases all kinds of reciprocal support between adult children and elderly parents as both will have a fairly full life-span. The decline in the number of young children may result in improved generational relations and free resources for the care and support of elderly parents. In the long term, however, the growing proportion of elderly persons and the fact that they are net recipients of family resources, means that those in the middle ages will have to bear a larger burden of supporting not just one but possibly two generations of elderly persons for a longer period of time.

The shift from young-dependency to old-dependency is likely to result in increased cost per capita for the family because the demand for support of the elderly is likely to be more expensive than for the young. With declining fertility and hence declining cohort size over time, the financial burden is likely to be beyond the capacity of the family to meet.

There are also couples who remain childless, some voluntarily. Their needs in old age, therefore, cannot be met by the support and care that would usually be provided by children. Related to this situation is the necessity to find alternative support for those elderly persons who have been abandoned and are homeless, or who have no surviving children.

#### Health and other social changes

One of the major financial burdens facing the family is related to health care. The increased longevity of the population with a higher proportion who would be "old old" means that health and activity problems of the elderly are likely to grow as well. In addition, the care that would be required for those who are frail, weak, disabled and ill would demand greater physical attention and commitment of time. For those who are fortunate to live in a family structure where there is more than one generation of elderly persons, the healthier ones may have to care for those who are not so able. For others where there is no help available around the house, it would be difficult to provide care in the home environment.

The extent that filial support and traditional commitment to the care of the elderly are likely to be maintained would determine whether such care and support are forthcoming in the generations to come. Modernization is expected to replace such family commitments with individualism, and the segmentation of urban living and the reluctance of the elderly to burden their children are likely to result in the neglect of needs of the elderly.

The improving status of women through increased literacy and education, economic self-sufficiency and control over fertility means that increasingly new institutional arrangements, such as household help and child-care centres, will perform household tasks and provide for the care and support of children. In turn, men and women would have to take cognizance of the fact that they themselves may not receive much family care and support when they grow old as some children may grow up with little emotional support from and attachment to the parents concerned.

The increased labour force participation of females has given rise to emotional and psychological stress in having to combine work outside the home with care of the family. The elderly, therefore, impose an additional burden, particularly elderly invalids suffering from chronic illnesses and prolonged senility. It may be necessary for some women to resign from their paid jobs to devote themselves fully to caring for their elderly relatives as care of elderly persons traditionally falls within the responsibility of women (especially daughters-in-law). This is especially onerous as the loss is not just purely monetary but may entail a loss of self-esteem and social involvement, which may be quite substantial.

There are increasing numbers of single-parent families (due either to temporary separation of the spouse because of job migration, divorce or death). Most of these families are headed by females, partly because of their longer life-span. The majority of women are concentrated in low-skilled, labour-intensive jobs in the agricultural sector or low-paying semi-skilled, assembly-type production operations in the industrial sector. The elderly in such families would probably have to contribute economically until an advanced age and compete with the young for the family's limited resources. If they are ill and weak, and are unable to work, they have even less chance of receiving adequate nutrition and care.

## Strengthening family support for old age

From the above discussion, it is clear that, on balance, with the changes mentioned, family structures do not automatically provide for the care and support of the elderly. Hence, policies must be formulated and support system programmes established which will enable families to continue being the main care providers for the elderly. This is for a number of reasons. Firstly, as mentioned previously, many countries cannot afford the economic burden of setting up an institutional framework to cater to the large number of elderly persons. Secondly and more importantly, there can be no substitute for what a family can provide for an elderly person; familiarity of surroundings, love and emotional ties, and a sense of belonging and of feeling wanted, to name only a few. These are very important for emotional security, especially during a period when one becomes increasingly dependent or loses a loved one. Thirdly, there are those who are not likely to get support and care from children because of childlessness, or non-marriage, or because they have no surviving children. In addition, families facing economic constraints such as those living in slums and squatter areas as a result of rural-urban migration, and those families living under the poverty line, including quite a number headed by females, are unlikely to be able to provide adequate economic support and care for their elderly folks when they themselves are struggling to make ends meet. In families where pressures are on those in the middle ages, particularly women, both social and economic assistance may be required to enable the family to cope. Fourthly, in the light of changing values and the breaking down of emotional ties and filial piety as a result of urbanization, migration and modernizing influences, and declining family size, there is a clear need that families would increasingly require such support services to ensure that they will be able to provide for the elderly family members. Such support services should draw on existing social and cultural structures in Asia, taking into account available economic resources.

Many of the situations discussed previously indicate that the difficulties facing the elderly result from major social and economic changes rather than the vulnerabilities of age itself. Hence, economic development of rural areas will bring forth many advantages, including improving the income and welfare of the families concerned and causing less social disruption and hence better provision of support and care for the elderly. With continuing urbanization associated with economic development, public and private provision of housing and other social infrastructure should provide for the requirements of elderly persons within an extended family system or for ageing parents to live close to their children. This may include housing facilities which cater to the needs of elderly persons, tax concessions or special allowances provided to children who co-reside with their elderly parents or who live fairly close by. Special grants may also be established for family-based income-generating projects. The allowances and concessions may be at great financial cost to the Governments and employers concerned, but the social benefits to the family, the elderly and society at large are beyond monetary value. It may also be appropriate to introduce policies for compulsory deduction from children's income for the care of elderly parents.

Promotion of traditional cultural values and the elderly as useful and respected members of society can be carried out fairly cheaply through various means. Cultural traditions and older persons can be portrayed positively in the mass media in the context of educational and recreational activities for members of all ages. In schools, educational materials could emphasize the reciprocal need for parental love to children and vice versa. The importance of reciprocal care and support between generations, including the sharing of accommodation and caring for grandchildren, should be encouraged and emphasized. There is also a need to formulate or strengthen policies/programmes aimed at enhancing family relationships across generations, such as having a "family day" (as in Malaysia), where both the young and old can participate.

Elderly persons could also be organized and utilized as a pool of valuable resources, with vast experience and expertise, to influence policies and participate in decision-making. In this way too, they themselves can command economic resources and have access to the opportunities available. By adopting innovative employment opportunities which reflect the changing strengths and needs of the elderly, elderly workers can play a catalytic role in economic and social development, which would enhance a positive perception of society towards the elderly. A flexible retirement age to enable the elderly to work for as long as they are able and want to, together with a social security scheme, are also in order, especially for those elderly persons who are childless or whose children are impoverished. Elderly persons could also be used as "first reserves" in instances of labour shortages, since future cohorts of the elderly will be well educated, and since most jobs involving modern technologies and most service sectors jobs do not require much physical strength.

Community and residential services for the elderly can be facilitated by Governments, either through non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or through local voluntary groups. Governments can make some initial financial contribution and subsidize the disadvantaged groups, but such community and residential services can be self-financing. The vast majority of the elderly persons who remain capable in their later years can be mobilized to organize and run such centres. The decline in employment opportunities for the elderly can now be offset by options for part-time employment in these centres and elsewhere. Those who

can afford it should be encouraged and organized to provide voluntary services so as to keep their minds and bodies active.

Child support services for working women can also be provided by such elderly persons. Community, religious and other voluntary organizations can play a major role in organizing these arrangements to meet emerging needs.

Concessions should be provided for all elderly persons, especially those who cannot afford to obtain basic aids such as spectacles, dentures and hearing aids as well as other implements where necessary for them to continue to interact and participate fully in the home and community. Public facilities and services should also ensure that priority lines are created for the elderly persons, and that their needs and comfort are attended to.

Medical care and services with appropriate medical staff and expertise to cater to the needs of the elderly should be set up to provide geriatric care, as such specialties are not yet available in many developing countries. As health costs tend to escalate beyond the reach of most elderly persons, some form of health insurance, possibly from the young, should be encouraged and implemented. For those in the disadvantaged groups, both the public and private sectors should provide some form of concessions so that the elderly in these groups can have access to good quality medical care. There should be legislation to cover the running of voluntary and commercial old-folks' homes, if such legislation does not exist, to protect those in need of such services.

## Conclusion

It is clear, therefore, that for the countries and areas in Asia, long-term development planning should cater for the need to increase social support services, such as health care, housing and educational facilities, the labour force and related areas, in line with changing demographic scenarios. Following the Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing put forward by the United Nations, there has been a noticeable trend towards recognizing the developmental impact of ageing on society, which complements the previously accepted and conventional approach to ageing as just a humanitarian or "welfare" concern. A shift towards an increase in the old-age dependency ratio, a declining work force, a deterioration in the health status of elderly persons, particularly among the "old" elderly persons, and income support requirements would call for adjustments in national expenditure and allocations, investment and consumption patterns, labour and employment.

When ageing of the population runs concurrent with rapid social changes in the family structure, it becomes critical for planning to improve also the status of elderly persons in society. Direct technical and financial forms of assistance are generally inadequate to meet the needs of elderly persons, although some forms of support are provided by the various United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, and governmental and non-governmental organizations.

In planning for the future, it is necessary to take cognizance of the changes in the characteristics and expectations of the elderly in the future as compared with the elderly persons of today. The future group of elderly persons are the current beneficiaries of post-war prosperity and economic growth, and are generally better educated, more urbanized or are at least more aware of urban opportunities and involved in the formal sectors of the economy. The culture of the elderly would change with a stronger sense of financial and personal independence. The relationship between the elderly persons and other family members would change, from one of dependency to mutual reliance. Life-styles would be different with the ageing of middle-class generations who would have different consumption patterns. As the elderly are not a homogeneous group, planning would have to take into account income, health and other socio-economic differentials and the needs of both males and females. In the future, with increasing proportions of elderly persons, the burden will be more towards ensuring sufficiently good quality social services, although proper nutrition and health care, and financial planning from the young, would reduce the need for such services.

The need to protect the welfare and jobs of older workers has to be weighed against the need to generate employment for the young. This is particularly so as the replacement of the former with the latter will reduce wage costs, and hence planners are faced with a difficult dilemma. A flexible wage system can be considered to prevent wage costs from rising owing to shifts in the age structure, or a flexible retirement age scheme may be pursued to allow the elderly to work if they so desire.

The issues that confront us as populations age are of paramount importance to our future. Families alone do not have the capacity to provide the care and support for the increasing number of elderly persons. Governments should, therefore, be urged to do what is necessary to facilitate and strengthen family

support.

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### **Fourth Asian and Pacific Population Conference**

The Fourth Asian and Pacific Population Conference will be held from 19 to 27 August 1992, in Bali, Indonesia, to enable ministers and other senior representatives of ESCAP members and associate members to review the population situation in the region and plan a course of action to deal with population and sustainable development issues into the twenty-first century. They will be joined by representatives of various United Nations agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in their discussions.

Co-sponsored by ESCAP and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Conference is held once every 10 years. The Government of Indonesia is hosting the Conference.

The theme of this ministerial-level Conference is "Population and Sustainable Development: Goals and Strategies into the Twenty-first Century". The choice of the theme is based on the fact that population growth in some parts of the region is actually beginning to exceed the ability of countries to sustain it. The relationship between population, resources and the environment is becoming all too visible in the form of massive deforestation, land degradation, and water and air pollution, to name but a few. That growth is also frustrating Governments' efforts to improve the nutrition of families, enhance the health of the people and increase educational opportunities for all.

Thus the provisional agenda for the Meeting of Senior Officials, from 19 to 24 August, covers the following topics: demographic situation and outlook; population, environment and development; metropolitan growth and urbanization, and their implications; developing more effective family planning/family health and welfare programmes; policies and programmes for fully involving women in the development process; human resources development and poverty alleviation issues; internal and international migration and its implications for socio-economic development policies; mortality and fertility transitions in Asia and the Pacific and their consequences; population ageing and its economic and social implications; population data and information issues; and policy formulation and implementation issues.

The provisional agenda for the Meeting of Ministers on 26 and 27 August includes the following items: review of policy formulation and implementation issues; consideration of the report and recommendations of the Meeting of Senior Officials; and other matters.

It is felt that, with concerted action at the regional level, Governments may take steps aimed at improving the quality of life for their populations by alleviating poverty and bringing about sustainable social and economic development.

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