A Socioeconomic Portrait of Older Malaysians: Role of the Family in Meeting the Challenges

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FOCUS

1 | AGEING SCENARIO & CHALLENGES
2 | SURVEY FINDINGS
3 | ROLE OF OLDER PERSONS
4 | ROLE OF FAMILIES
5 | ROLE OF THE STATE
6 | POLICIES
7 | STRATEGIES/PROGRAMS
Malaysia at a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>28.3 m</td>
<td>34.9 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Distribution (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-14 years</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-24 years</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-59 years</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>42.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-74 years</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75+</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>50.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>49.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median age</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>29.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Male: 50.9%  Female: 49.1%

Faces of Malaysian Families

Mean age at first marriage

2000
2004*
28.6 (Male) 25.1 (Female)
28.9 (Male) 25.3 (Female)

Total Fertility Rate (2007)
2.2

Nuclear family (2004)*
70.3% (Pen. Malaysia)
65.9% (Sabah)
61.6% (Sarawak)

Average household size (2004)*
4.5 (Pen. Malaysia)
5.0 (Sabah)
4.5 (Sarawak)

Working married women (2004)*
58.0%

Source: Statistics Department, Malaysia
Population Census 2000
*Malaysian Population and Family Survey 2004

Note: Statistics Department, Malaysia
**Trends of the Elderly**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Elderly ('000)</th>
<th>% of Total Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>386.6</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>546.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>745.2</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>1032.3</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1398.5</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2134.0</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>3439.6</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Statistics, Malaysia

**Population Distribution by Age Group and Sex, Malaysia**

- **2010**
- **2020**
- **2030**
The Challenges of Population Change

• People are living longer
• Fertility has declined
• The large baby born generation – born 1946 – 1964 has started to enter retirement & pre-retirement years

These developments have significant implications for social programs & for future labour force.

Profile of Aging in Malaysia

• In 2000, 6.2% of the population was above 60 yrs
• Aging population expected to increase to 7.4% in 2010
• Number of elder to rise to 9.9% by 2020 and 11% by 2025
• Females the majority among the elderly
• By ethnic group, the Chinese have higher percentage of senior citizens
Malaysia will be an aged country by the year 2023 when those aged 60 years and over reaches 10% of the total population.

Findings of MPFS-4 (ELDERLY)
Ageing Issues

1. Living Arrangement
2. Care of the Elderly
3. Participation in Economic Activities
4. Income and Savings
5. Support from Children
6. Health

Sample Size, MPFS-4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Peninsula</th>
<th>Sabah</th>
<th>Sarawak</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-69</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70+</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>689</td>
<td>1,081</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Living Arrangement

- **75%** elderly stay with their family members; **15%** stay with their spouses; **10%** stay alone.

- Attention should be given to the elderly living alone especially those having health problems.
Perception on suitability of living in *Old Folks’ Home*

Willingness to go to *Day Care Centre*
Men rely more on their spouses while women rely on their children when they are sick.
Participation in economic activities

- Participation Rate declines with increase of age...
- Men’s participation rate is higher
- Elderly living in rural areas are more likely to remain economically active
Burden of working age-group (15 - 64) to support an elderly

- 2000: 15 people
- 2004: 11 people
Most of the elderly depend on pension, EPF and transfers from their children.

Majority have savings in banks and Tabung Haji

Less than 10% have insurance scheme.

1 in 5 Elderly who are not economically active don’t receive financial help from their children.
Elderly women are more likely to be lonely

By Marital Status
By age

LONELINESS

HEALTH
Health of the elderly

- Increase in the numbers and proportion of population over age 60
- Most elderly have few health problems but many need home care because they do not have children or other relatives to take care of them – women are already stretched with work and childcare responsibilities
- Actions:
  - Increased focus on geriatric medicine
  - Certify and license home care givers
  - Affordable care for elderly with low income – transportation to hospital etc.
Challenges of Ageing

• Longer life spans: more healthy years or added years of illness & dependency?

• Feminization of Ageing

• Poverty

• Access to Services

Malaynian Families

• Families and households have become smaller from 5.2 in 1980 to 4.5 in 2000;

• Shift from extended to nuclear families (about 70% in 2004);

• Women’s average age at first marriage has risen from 23.5 in 1980 to 25.1 in 2000 and more educated women are remaining single;

• Women have fewer children and later in life;

• Women’s participation in the labor force has increased from 44.8% in 2000 to 45.7% in 2003 and 47% in 2007;
Dual income families are becoming the norm (58% of married women are working).

Lower fertility rates and higher life expectancy contribute to a larger share of older persons within the overall population.

The burden on working – age parents of supporting younger and older dependents.

- Enhance the respect & self worth of the elderly
- Improve potential for the elderly to live independently
- Make available facilities to care & protect the elderly
- Encourage efforts to provide programs & activities for the elderly
- Support research efforts on issues related to the elderly

Plan of Action

- Operationalising the National Policy, ensuring the integration & participation of older persons in the development process
- Collaborative activities to be undertaken by public & service sectors in areas like health education, training, social & recreation activities

PROGRAMS
Initiatives for Older Persons

Shifted from a welfare approach to a development approach to ensure active & productive ageing – emphasized on community participation

The provision of special counters / seating areas by Govt. agencies

Rebate of 50% on fares for domestic air & rail travel

Employment opportunities for older persons: claim 100% tax rebate on retraining cost

Retirement age has been increased from 56 to 58

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Initiatives for Older Persons

Establishment of 18 day-care centers

• Provide financial aid to the poor elderly

• Tax deductions for medical expenses incurred by parents

- Govt has undertaken measures to provide for an environment for the elderly to remain health, active & secure
- Programs to create greater awareness among family members & community in caring for elderly
- Enhancing community level participation through strong network of community services
- More coordinated efforts in implementation of programs for elderly
- Increasing availability & affordability of community support services
- Emphasis on providing medical care for elderly.

New Challenges – Emerging Needs

- Changes in family size, structure and characteristics
- Changes in norms and values of society especially among the young
- Demographic shifts with population aging
- Balancing work and family life
- Changing in family lifestyles and relationships
- Intergenerational Solidarity
Priority Areas for Policy

• Communities have to actively support the family institution;

• Societal structures need to support and enhance quality of family life.

• Protection of vulnerable members of families; and

• Safety net to protect families

Solutions?

• Healthy ageing: prevention of chronic diseases, postponement of disability & dependency

• Research: Better understanding of ageing process & age associated challenges

• Planning for high-quality, cost effective, well distributed healthcare

• Participation in workforce
  Encourage participation in social life
  Promote healthy living
  Preventive health services accessible to older people
Family First: Bring Your Heart Home

THANK YOU