

Ageing Population and Gender Issues in Asia-Pacific Region

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While the majority of the world's elderly population resides in the developing countries, the Asian and Pacific region is home to the largest number of older persons. Worldwide, the number of people aged 60 and over will increase from about 600 million in 2000 to almost 2000 million in 2050, of whom about half will reside in Asia. During the second half of the twentieth century, countries in Asia and the Pacific region have experienced unparalleled declines in mortality and fertility. The present paper examines the impact of the growth of the ageing population on women's well being. The challenges for setting gender-sensitive policies for women and the elderly are discussed in the context of Hong Kong and the Asia-Pacific region. Also, the contribution of the ESCAP and MIPAA in addressing gender issues in ageing population has been looked into. The paper concludes that in Asian societies, ageing issues are generating an active debate about gender, the family, the organization of the workplace, and the policy approaches to address these challenges. Given the fact that people over 65 will constitute close to one-quarter of the population in Asia by 2050, and over one-third of the population in Hong Kong by that time, more refined age grouping with sex-disaggregated data will provide a more useful data base for policy-makers and researchers. Further, the challenge of human service planning for the ageing population has highlighted the importance of mainstreaming gender from a life-cycle perspective in research, policy, and planning in the new millennium.

Key Words: Ageing population, gender issues, Asia-Pacific Region, demographic changes, life-cycle approach, and developed countries.

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