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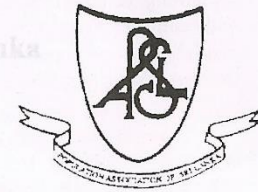
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Mujahid G. and Siddhisena K.A.P., Demographic Prognosis for South Asia: A future of rapid ageing, Papers in Population Ageing No.6, UNFPA, Asia and the Pacific Regional Office, Bangkok, 2009

The growth of the ageing population (age 60 and above) during next four decades is projected to be faster in South Asian region with an annual growth rate of 3 per cent. Currently, eight countries of the region namely, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, account for approximately one fourth of the developing world's ageing population. The collection of papers in the book titled 'Demographic Prognosis for South Asia: A future of rapid ageing' by Mujahid and Siddhisena provides an impressive and timely important investigation of situation of population ageing in South Asia. Concerning the rapidity of ageing, authors highlight the increase of proportion of elderly population in the region, which was accounted for 5.2 per cent and 8.3 percent of the total population increase during 1950-1975 and 1975-2000, and the share, is projected to increase further to 20.3 per cent in 2000-2025 and 62.3 per cent in 2025-2050. The authors have paid significant attention to demographic, socioeconomic, health and policy dimensions of ageing in order to understand emerging ageing related issues that will be faced by the region in the next four decades.

The book is divided into six sections. The first section examines demographics of population ageing focusing mainly on fertility and mortality trends, and changes in age structure in South Asia in comparison with other regions and as well as the world. Then some implications of changes in age structure are discussed in terms of dependency ratio, ageing index, median age, potential support ratio, and parent support ratio. Section 2 elaborates the characteristics of the elderly population, emphasizing the key features of older population such as, further ageing of older population, feminization of ageing, and rural-urban differentials in ageing that have been observed in the region. Section 3 presents inter-country variations in population ageing in each of the eight countries of South Asia. This section provides evidence on wide differences of ageing from country to country. The emerging ageing - related issues in relation to health services, long-term care, living arrangements, income and social security, protection against abuse, and other issues are discussed in section 4. In this section authors draw policy maker's attention to the key issues which will inevitably emerge in the region within the next four decades as a result of the demographic changes. The section 5 examines the relevant policy measures such as legislation, social protection and welfare

measures, tax benefits and discounts that have been introduced by the eight countries of South Asia in order to address issues related to population ageing. The final section provides some conclusions of their investigation of ageing situation of South Asia and important recommendations for improving quality of elderly lives.

The book very clearly emphasizes that all countries of South Asia are experiencing an increasing trend of population ageing during next four decades and therefore, governments should try to mainstream ageing in all phases of development such as policies, programmes and strategies. The book is a good source of information for all those involved in ageing related research, making policies and programmes for elderly and geriatric care in South Asia.

Despite the overall merits of Mujahid and Siddhisena's analyses of ageing, a few areas on ageing need to be researched more. The authors ignore the theoretical background on ageing and explore demographic features, issues and policy responses. Also missing is an in-depth examination of morbidity patterns or burden of diseases and psychological issues of ageing. On the overall, analysis provides an insight for further micro level analysis of ageing situation in each country giving the special attention to various sub-groups of its population. Such investigation would help in identifying the specific ageing related issues in each background and context.

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