



Demographic Aspects of Older Women in Indonesia

¹Wan-Ibrahim, W.A., ²Asyraf, H.A.R., ³I. Komang Astina and ⁴Budijanto

¹School of Social Development, Universiti Utara Malaysia, 06010 Sintok, Kedah, Malaysia

²Faculty of Social Development, Universiti Malaysia Terengganu, 21030 Kuala Terengganu, Malaysia

³Faculty of Social Sciences, Universitas Negeri Malang, Malang, Indonesia

⁴Faculty of Social Sciences, Universitas Negeri Malang, Malang, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Recent years witnessed the number of older people aged 60 years and older keeps growing worldwide. Recognizing that the world population is ageing, the United Nations designated 1999 as "The Year of the Older Persons". This article aims to describe the growth of older women in Indonesia. Although current older persons aged 60 years and older comprise a relatively small portion of the population in Indonesia, the percentage is projected to rise significantly. Using a secondary data analysis, various sources of existing records related to older persons in Indonesia are reviewed. Like other parts of the world, majority of the older persons in Indonesia are women. This paper describes some demographic aspects of older women in Indonesia with special reference to growth, life expectancy, marital status and labor force participation.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years the number of older persons aged 60 years and older is growing worldwide, and now population ageing has become a global phenomenon. In 1999 for instance the number of older population was estimated to be nearly 600 million. In 2050, this figure is projected to rise to 2 billion. In terms of percentage, in 1999, this category of population constitutes 10% of the world population (Chakraborti, 2002). The proportion of older population in the world population increased from 8.2% in 1950 to 10% in 2000, and it is projected to increase to 21% by 2050 (Ghazy Mujahid. 2006). Recognizing that the world population is ageing, the United Nations designated 1999 as "The Year of the Older Persons" (Kinsella and Velkoff, 2001). Demographers estimate that after the year 2010, the number and proportion of older persons will rise rapidly all over the world, which result in most of societies now have a luxury of older persons. Before this the growth of older persons is associated with the developed and industrialized nations of Europe and North America only.

It is especially true because developed and industrialized nations of Europe and North America have been leading the process of population ageing (United Nations, 2003) and developed nations as a whole now have many people aged 55 years and over as compared to children aged 15 years and below, while the developing countries, by contrast, still have a high proportion of children under age 15 and a relatively low proportion of older people (Kinsella and Velkoff, 2001). The absolute numbers of older persons in developing nations are large, however. From about 600 million older persons aged 60 years and older in 1999, more than 60% are concentrated in the less developed regions, and most of the additions to the aged population in the world will also be in these regions (Chakraborti, 2002).

The majority of older persons in the world are women, and women now outnumber men at older ages in most countries. In 1999, around 55% of the older persons aged 60 years and older are women, and the percentage remained almost the same since 1950. Neither are they expected to change in the next fifty years (Chakraborti, 2002). The percentage of women in older age group is higher in more developed regions than in the less developed regions. The reason for this is that women generally survive longer (Chakraborti, 2002). In line with the increasing in older women worldwide, the trend is also observed in demographic structure in Indonesia. Population ageing has started emerging as a distinct demographic feature and the proportion of older persons now exceeds 8% and is projected to rise to 25% by 2050. This means that by 2050 one in four Indonesians would be classified as an older person (Nugroho Abikusno (2007). Therefore from some published materials, this article attempts to describe the growth of older women in Indonesia.

Corresponding Author: Wan-Ibrahim, W.A., School of Social Development, Universiti Utara Malaysia, 06010 Sintok, Kedah, Malaysia
E-mail: wiwa@uum.edu.my

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Data on older women used in the present article are taken from many sources. In particular, this article utilizes secondary data as its main devices. Secondary data refers to data collected by other researchers taken from Demographic Institute (1993), Projection of Indonesian Population: 1990-2020 (Aris Ananta and Evi Nurvida Arifin (1991), M. Djuhari Wirakartakusumah, Harto Nurdin and Turro Selrits Wongkaren (1997), Nugroho Abikusno (2007) as well as various sources related to older persons in Indonesia. Data from U. S. Census Bureau (2000) compiled by Kinsella and Velkoff (2001) and data on World Population Ageing released by United Nations (2009) are also important elements for this article. Through these secondary sources, we notice some important information about women older population in Indonesia that worth noting.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Growth of Older Population vs. Infant Population:

According to the law of Well-being of the Older Persons in Indonesia (Law No. 13/1998), a person considered old when the person is aged 60 years and older (Hardywinoto and Tony Setiabudhi, 2005). In the Law of older Persons prior to this law (Law No. 4/1965), the limit was 55 years. The change was associated with the increased in life expectancy and the change in retirement age. Indonesia has recently experiencing the rapid growth of her older population. In 1980 for instance, the population aged 60 and over was 7999 473 persons, which was 5.5% out of the whole population of Indonesia. It has increased further to 14440 817 (7.2%) in 2000, and is expected to reach 28.7 million (11.3%) in 2020 (Tukiranand EdiastutiBoy, 2004).

One of the measures of population aging is that the number of older population increases whilst at the same time the number of children and infant decrease. In other words, the growth of older population occurs concurrently with a decline of children or infant population. Although in Indonesia today the numbers of infant still outnumber elderly population, this scenario will change in the near future. In 1971, the percentage of infant population aged 4 years and below was about 16.1% of the total population of Indonesia as a whole. At that time the percentage of older population aged 60 years and above was 4.5%. The percentage of infant is decline over time, whilst the percentage of older population increases. In 2020, the percentage of older persons will be 11.4% while the infant is 6.9%. Nugroho Abikusno (2007) reviews data on 2000 census reported that the proportion of the population aged 60 years or more was 7.9% in rural areas and 6.2 in urban areas. Most of the provinces on the densely populated islands of Java and Bali have an older population amounting to more than 7% (Nugroho Abikusno, 2008). A greater proportion of older persons in rural population were due to the rural-urban migration whereas lot of younger persons migrates to urban areas.

The Growth of Older Women:

Population ageing is not gender-neutral (Pawliczko and Troisi, 2008). Older women make up a majority of the world's older population. This is due to the fact that the mortality rate of male population over the life-course is higher. As in other parts of the world, the majority of older persons in Indonesia are also women. Women have always constituted more than 50% of the older population and are projected to do so until 2050. Older women constitute an even higher proportion in the category of the oldest old.

At present, nearly 60% of Indonesia's oldest are women and is expected to increase to 64% by 2030 (Nugroho Abikusno, 2007). In 1995, from a total of 13 600 962 older persons aged 60 years and above, 53.5% are women compared to only 46.5% male. In 2010, out of 20 937 104 older persons aged 60 years and above, the number of older women was 11 125 355 (53.1%) compared to only 9 811 749 (46.9%) older men. In terms of percentage, there were 7.4% older women as compared to 6.5% men. In 2010 the percentage of older women has increased to 9.5% as compared to only 8.4% men. This scenario will remain the same in the future, and it is projected that this percentage will be reached 12.3% in 2020 as compared to only 10.6 older men (Ananta and Arifin, 1991).

Life Expectancy:

Demographers use the term of life expectancy to refer to the expected years of life remaining at a given age. In developed countries, where low fertility has prevailed over the past decades, increases in the proportion of older population are now primarily caused by increasing survival to advanced ages (United Nations, 2009). Following continues decline in fertility and life expectancy of population rises tremendously, most people are now live longer. Life expectancy at birth increased globally by 21 years since 1950, from 46.6 years in 1950-1955 to 67.6 years in 2005-2010 (United Nations, 2009). However, there are great variations in life expectancy exist between nations within developing or less developed nations themselves.

Countries, such as Hong Kong, Israel and Singapore for instance, life expectancy at birth is currently higher than 80 years, whilst in other countries, such as Afghanistan and Zimbabwe, it does not surpass 45 years (United Nations, 2009). Because of women's life expectancy is greater than that of men counterparts, women today

represent a majority of the older population of the world (United Nations, 2009). Women in most countries today live longer than they did some decades ago.

Recent findings from World Health Organization (WHO) (Reuters, September 1, 2013) reports life expectancy for women at 50 has improved. A WHO study found that in wealthier countries deaths of older women from non-communicable diseases has fallen dramatically in recent decades, especially from cancers of the stomach, colon, breast and cervix. Although life expectancy for older women has improved globally, the gap between poor and rich countries is growing. An older woman in Germany can now expect to live to 84 and in Japan to 88 years, against 73 in South Africa and 80 in Mexico (Reuters, September 1, 2013). The ageing of the older population in Indonesia is explained, among other things, by the increasing life expectancy at old age.

In Indonesia, the life expectancy of older population has increased. In 2005-2010, it was estimated that the life expectancy of older persons at age 60 was 17.3. This figure is projected to increase to 18.4 in 2025-2030, and will be increased further to 20.4 in 2045-2050 (Nugroho Abikusno, 2007). By the life expectancy at age 60 will be reached 20.4 in 2045-2050, we mean that in Indonesia on average a person reaching 60 years at present can expect to live another 20.4 years by 2045-2050.

Marital Status:

Spouse can be a main source of support provider for vulnerable older persons in need of care (Myers, 1992). There are marked differences between older men and women. Not many older women who still have their spouses alive. Only around 50% or less of such older women all over the world have their spouse alive. In most countries of the world, developed or developing, the majority of older men are currently married, and about 80% of older men all over the world are lucky to have their spouses surviving (United Nations, 1999). In Bangladesh, Kuwait and Jordan, the proportion has exceeded 90% (Chakraborti, 2002). United Nations (2009), estimated that at the global level, there are about 48% of older women are married and living with a spouse, while among older men the proportion married reaches 80%.

In general, older women are less likely to remarry after the death of their spouse than older men. The remarriage rate among older widowed women is lower than among widowed men. In Indonesia, as in other parts of the world, the majority of older men are currently married, and only a small proportion of older women still have their spouse alive. There were only 36% of older women recorded as currently married as compared to 84% for older men counterpart in 1995 (Chakraborti, 2002). Marital status has been very important to the life of older person. Marital status strongly affects many aspects of one's life. Studies in developed countries show that married people are healthier, and live longer than their non-married counterparts (Kinsella and Velkoff, 2001).

Labor Force Participation:

Labor force participation of older population has declined worldwide over the last decades, where over the past 50 years it has declined by more than 40 percent, but participation rates are higher in the less developed regions (United Nations, 2002). Generally, all over the world, there are fewer women in the labor force compared to men counterparts. However, at the world level, labor force participation rate among older population has been falling for men but rising for women (United Nations, 2009). Among older men, it decreased from 32% in 1980 to 28% in 2009, while among older women, the rate has been increasing, from 9% in 1980 to 15% in 2009 (United Nations, 2009).

One may ask why older women participate in the labor force. Elizabeth T. Hill (2002) indicates that there is some evidence that women may work because they have to work for economic survival, while other women, particularly more-educated women continue to work till older ages because they prefer to work. For the majority of older persons in developing countries, employment has been an important source of economic security. They have to remain economically active till older ages to support themselves.

In Indonesia, as in other developing countries, older women are more likely to be economically inactive. To be secured, they have to work, but compared to older men counterparts, the employment rate for these older women is still small. Only 30% of women aged 65 years or over are economically active as compared to 57% of men aged 65 years and over (Nugroho Abikusno, 2007).

Conclusion:

Population ageing should be looked as a process, by which older population becomes a proportionally larger share in the total population. It is a distinct demographic feature not only in developed regions but also in developing ones as well. This present article shows that as in other parts of the world, population ageing has started emerging as a distinct demographic feature in Indonesia, and women today represent a majority of the older persons in the country. Women have always constituted more than 50% of older population and are projected to do so until 2050. In recent years, from the whole number of older persons the proportion of older women has increased to 53.1% compared to only 46.9% older men. In terms of percentage of total population, there were 9.5% older women as compared to 8.4% men. This difference has been the result of women's life expectancy which is greater than that of men counterpart. The prolongation of life and the difference in life

expectancy between women and men elderly, on the one hand, are a success story of human technology, but on the other hand, these circumstances may result in some other consequences such as not many such older women have their spouse alive. In recent years there were only 36% of older women recorded as currently married.

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