

Current State of Research on Social Inclusion in Asia and the Pacific: Focus on Ageing, Gender and Social Innovation

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Ageing, Gender and Social Inclusion

- Demographic shifts
- Knowledge is critical to generating evidence-informed policies
- Objective: state of literature on ageing, gender and social inclusion
- Alert policymakers to the current research gaps
- Vulnerable groups: older women
- Why are they vulnerable? (a) lack access to resources, (b) cultural barriers, and (c) unable to effect change.
- Different from older men
- Social inclusion becomes critical through policies

Outline of Presentation

- I What do We Know about Older Women and Social Inclusion?
- II Common Research Themes
- III Examples of Social Innovation
- IV Research Recommendations

Research materials

- Printed materials (books, articles, chapters, reports, etc.) & internet (reports, e-alerts, etc.)
- Research undertaken in the last 2 decades by:
 - (a) academics,
 - (b) multilateral and international organizations, and
 - (b) NGOs
- Qualitative and quantitative analyses
- Local as well as foreign researchers

General materials

- Ageing and gender: rich
- Demographic advantage: “feminization of ageing”
- Older women are disadvantaged/men are also disadvantaged
- E.g. little or no income: slip into poverty
- Ageing, gender and social inclusion
- Social inclusion: policy formulation sensitive to differences between and among various groups /sectors
- Latter was generated by multilateral organizations but tended to be fragmented
- Influence on policymaking
- Gap between research and policymaking

I What do We Know about Older Women?

- Persistent gender gaps & women are disadvantaged
- Gender gaps e.g. employment, health, etc.
- Income gap: impact of motherhood
- “You go into marriage unequal, and come out unequal”
- Life course perspective
- Gender: asymmetrical relationship marked by “power” differentials
- Reinforced by cultural factors reinforced by structural barriers
- Southeast Asia: Douglas Raybeck

Figure 3.1. Economic activity of men and women of age 60 and more in the CIA countries, 2012, Percent

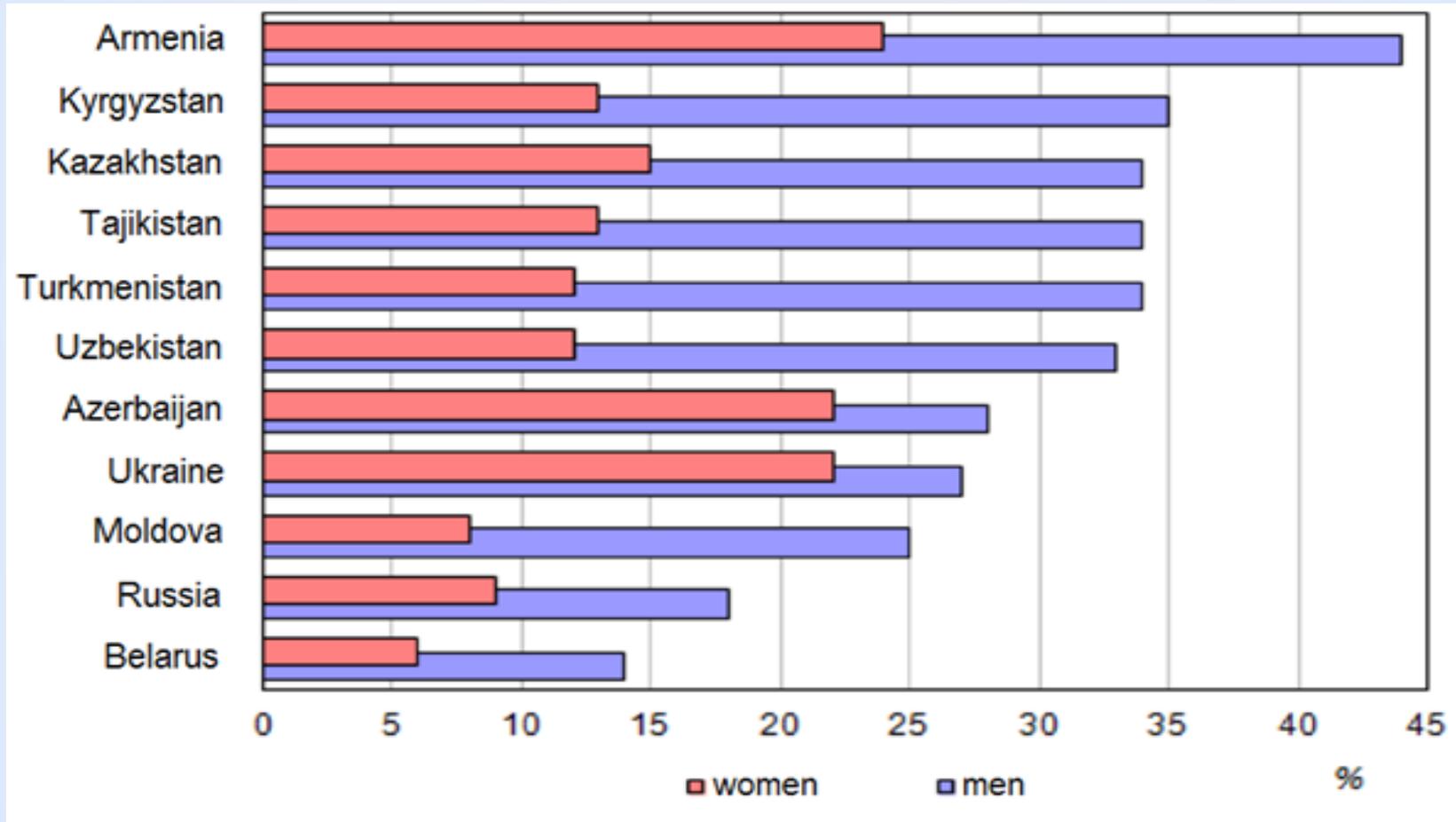


Table 5.2. Dependency Ratio, Potential Support Ratio, Pension Coverage and Labour Force Participation and Statutory Retirement Age in Countries in South Asia

	Total dependency ratio (persons aged 0-19 and aged 65 or over per 100 persons aged 20-64)		Potential support ratio (persons aged 20-64 per person aged 65 or over)		Pension coverage (per cent of persons of statutory pensionable age)	Labour force participation of persons aged 65 years or over (percentage)		Statutory retirement age (years)	
	2015	2030	2015	2030	2010	2015		latest available	
						Males	Females	Males	Females
Afghanistan	139.8	92.0	16.9	16.4	10.7	43.5	7.5	60	55
Bangladesh	80.0	62.4	11.2	8.3	39.5	49.4	15.9	65	62
Bhutan	70.8	56.2	11.6	8.3	3.2	46.4	30.6	60	60
India	78.0	67.5	10.0	7.0	24.1	43.2	11.4	55	55
Maldives	69.7	61.6	12.5	8.0	99.7	50.6	24.9	65	65
Nepal	98.5	67.3	9.1	8.1	62.5	67.6	41.6	58	58
Pakistan	98.9	85.1	11.2	9.8	2.3	40.6	9.9	60	55
Sri Lanka	71.0	73.4	6.3	3.7	17.1	35.0	8.2	55	50

II Common Research Themes

- Education
- Employment & Livelihoods
- Pensions & Income Security
- Health
- Rural elderly

Research Theme: Education

- Gender gaps in education remain.
- Cultural barriers in spite of reverse gender gap occurring in some countries.
- Critical barrier in finding employment.
- End up in low-paid jobs or the informal sector.
- Earning potential is reduced considerably.
- Reinforces the financial vulnerability of women, especially in old age.

Table 4.2. Gender Equality in Education Statistics		
Country	Gender Parity Index at primary level	Gender Parity Index at secondary level
Cook Islands	97.3 (2014)	99.1 (2014)
FSM	100.0 (2011)	100.9 (2011)
Fiji	94.0 (2012)	104.0 (2012)
Kiribati	103.0 (2013)	153.0 (2013)
Nauru	102.0 (2013)	106.0 (2013)
Niue	90.0 (2013)	97.0 (2013)
Palau	87.7 (2013-14)	103.0 (2013-14)
PNG	92.0 (2013)	71.0 (2013)
RMI	100.0 (2010-11)	103.0 (2010-11)
Samoa	103.0 (2012)	113.0 (2012)
Solomon Islands	99.0 (2013)	105.0 (2013)
Tonga	90.0 (2011)	99.0 (2011)
Tuvalu	100.0 (2011)	152.0 (2011)
Vanuatu	97.0 (2011)	110.0 (2011)
Source: PIFS 2015 MDGs Tracking Report		

Research Theme: Employment & Livelihoods

- Barriers: shortage of suitable work, lack of equal access to the labour force, and employer discrimination.
- Wage gap for similar work.
- Underrepresented in certain occupational sectors: East Asia - legislators, senior officials, management, professional and technical workers.
- Unpaid work: agricultural work
- Dominate informal labour sector and low-paid jobs.
- Positive implications of encouraging more women to join the workforce and delay in retirement age.

Research Theme: Pensions & Income Security

- Older women: lack access to pensions
- Widows
- Uneven
- Often cover employees in the formal labour sector: exception Sri Lanka
- India: National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP), pensions provided to poor elderly, widows and severely disabled persons.
- Unemployment benefits: Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) (2009)
- Financial insecurity a push factor for employment in old age, e.g. Vietnam.

Research Theme: Pensions & Income Security

- Amounts are small.
- Pensions for persons below the poverty line.
- Thailand: pay-out for the formal pension scheme is around two-thirds below the national poverty line.
- Small but “pensions make the difference between swimming and sinking”
- Some PICs: non-contributory income security

Research Theme: Health

- Healthy life expectancy: women live a greater number of years in disability
- More prone to disability and chronic illnesses reinforcing the idea that: “women become sick, men (just) die”.
- Disabilities: mobility issues, vision and/or hearing impairments, diabetes and diabetic complications, cardiovascular diseases, memory loss, and increasingly, cancer.
- Healthcare costs.
- Impairs capacity to work.
- Dual factors increase their dependence.
- Support systems are receding with falling fertility and shrinking family size.
- Worldwide, Japan, ROK and China have the lowest total fertility rate (TFR).

Research Theme: Health

- Medical health insurance schemes
- Thailand: universal health coverage
- Indonesia: existing Jaminan Kesehatan Nasional (Universal Health Care)

Research Theme: Rural Elderly

- Proportion of elderly in rural areas growing.
- Rural-urban migration
- Growing numbers are older women.
- Rural elderly are worse off than urban counterparts e.g. health outcomes.
- Thailand: rural women are more likely to live alone.
- Lack of public and private support structures

III Social Innovation: Definition

“new ideas (products, services and models) that simultaneously meet social needs (more effectively than alternatives) and create new social relationships or collaborations ... [including] innovations that are both good for society and enhance society’s capacity to act”.

Source: Murray, Robin, Caulier-Grice, Julie and Geoff Mulgan (2010) *The Book of Social Innovation*. UK: The Young Foundation.

Research: Social Innovation

- Example 1 (India):

An innovative **state-civil society model of care** which utilizes **volunteers** from the local community trained **to identify problems of the chronically ill** and to intervene effectively with active support from a network of trained professionals.

- Example 2 (Japan)

Adjusting the **pension system to account for longevity and inflation** and instituting multiple **health and long-term care reforms** such as home- and community-based services.

Research: Social Innovation

- Example 3 (Australia)

Creation of **'men's sheds'** in neighbourhoods to facilitate elderly men's interactions and relationship building based on socialization activities such as carpentry, joinery and other hobbies to prevent depression.

- Example 4 (Singapore)

Legislating family care so as to prevent older men from abandonment by their children since they have weaker social networks than older women.

Research: Social Innovation

- Example 5 (Thailand)

Healthcare programmes for the **destitute** provided at all government hospitals and health centres so that older persons above 60 and above can access free medical services.

- Example 6 (Philippines)

In cases of physical and mental abuse, a **platform (radio programme)** to which the elderly can reach out to was created to reach out to the elderly who do not have anyone else to turn to for help.

General Research Recommendations

- Governments, corporates and civil society organizations should aim to **bridge the gap** between research and policymaking in the areas of ageing, gender and social inclusion in the next two years.
- Member States of the Asia Pacific will support a **two-year pilot research project** as well as related knowledge brokering activities on the themes of ageing, gender, social inclusion and social innovation.
- At least US\$ 300,000 need to be **mobilized to support MOST research** on ageing, gender and social inclusion over a period of two years.

Research Recommendations for the Sub-Regions

- Research on a range of elderly issues including **income security, nutrition, sanitation, healthcare and elderly support**.
- Research has found that the *rural elderly*, female and the oldest old tend to suffer from **poverty** much more than their urban counterparts.
- Research on **social care funding**, sustainable home- and community-based **long-term care systems**, and improved services for the elderly.

Research Recommendations for the Sub-Regions

- Research should extend to cover older women, in particular **older women with disabilities** and rural older women since these groups of women tend to have limited access to healthcare.
- Research on **interventions to foster “active ageing”** should focus on social inclusion and participation in all aspects of life by maximizing opportunities for **health, employment and security**.
- The role of **pension systems** should be researched further, especially how they would generate the social inclusion of older persons, especially older women who have worked in the informal sector.

Research Recommendations for the Sub-Regions

- There should be research on how older women might benefit from **medical (health) insurance schemes** especially since older women have less education than older men and are more likely not to have engaged in paid employment and thus are left to struggle to have to pay for healthcare services because of inadequate savings.
- Research on ageing should take the **life course perspective**. Factors in childhood such as nutrition and education will influence health and employment during the middle years and ultimately show in health and economic status during the older years.

Terima Kasih &
Thank you!