

Brief Summary on the ageing

Population ageing is one of the most significant trends of the 21st century. It has important and far-reaching implications for all aspects of society. Around the world, two persons celebrate their sixtieth birthday every second – an annual total of almost 58 million sixtieth birthdays. With one in nine persons in the world aged 60 years or over, projected to increase to one in five by 2050, population ageing is a phenomenon that can no longer be ignored.

Who is old? (Definition of older People)

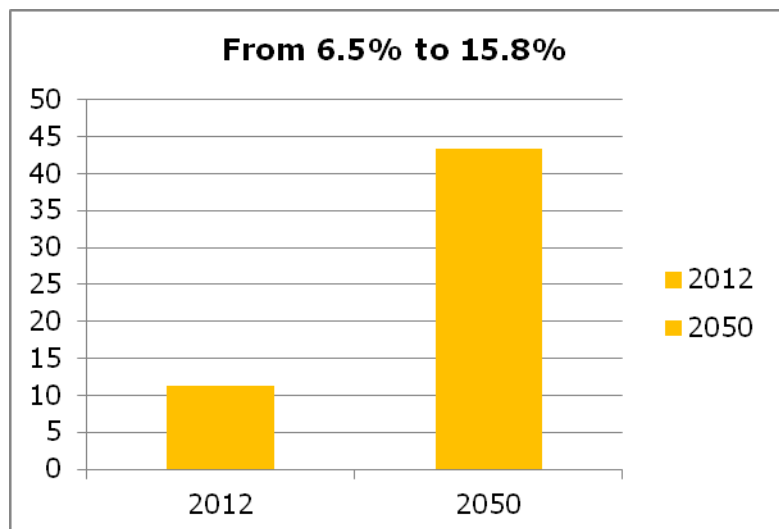
The United Nations uses 60 years to refer to older people. This line, which divides younger and older cohorts of a population, is also used by demographers. However, in many developed countries, the age of 65 is used as a reference point for older persons as this is often the age at which persons become eligible for old-age social security benefits. So, there is no exact definition of “old” as this concept has different meanings in different societies.

Defining “old” is further challenged by the changing average lifespan of human beings. Around 1900, average life expectancy was between 45 and 50 years in the developed countries of that time. Now, life expectancy in developed countries reaches 80 years.

What is ageing? And its implications in Pakistan:

When talking about ageing, it is essential to distinguish between population or demographic ageing as “the process whereby older individuals become a proportionately larger share of the total population” and individual ageing, the process of individuals discussions with older people in South Africa, for example, showed that they associated old age both with experience gained in life and increasing dependence on others. Chronological definitions of old age were not viewed as so important in signifying old age as changes in physical and mental capacity. Older persons are a highly diverse population group, in terms of, for example, age, sex, ethnicity, education, income and health. It is important to recognize this in order to adequately address the needs of all older persons, especially the most vulnerable.

Pakistan is sixth most populous country in the world and is among the 15 countries where people over 60 years are more than 10 million.



There will be 43.3 Million people (15.8%) over 60 in Pakistan by 2050 as compared to 11.6 Million (6.5%) in 2012.

Human Rights of Older people that need consideration in Pakistan

- Older people should have easy access to commercial and entertainment places. For their convenience ramps should be constructed and wheel chairs should be provided at the entrances.
- In local transport there should be specific front seats for them.
- Government should develop mechanisms so that older people can easily obtain pensions from banks, services from health centers etc.

HYOGO framework for action (2005-15)

The World Conference on Disaster Reduction was held from 18 to 22 January 2005 in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, and adopted the present Framework for Action 2005-2015, Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters (here after referred to as the “Framework for Action”). The Conference provided a unique opportunity to promote a strategic and systematic approach to reducing vulnerabilities¹ and risks to hazards. It underscored the need for, and identified ways of, building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters. This HOGO framework under the section of general consideration states that “Cultural diversity, age, and vulnerable groups should be taken into account when planning for disaster risk reduction, as appropriate.”

Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA):

The MIPAA aims “to ensure that persons everywhere are able to age with security and dignity and to continue to participate in their societies as citizens with full rights.” Ageing will be the dominant and most visible aspect of world population dynamics in the 21st century. It is expected that, by the year 2050, the populations of numerous countries will consist of over 30% older persons. This situation presents both challenges and opportunities; the MIPAA provides Governments with recommendations and policy advice, which they may interpret to their national circumstances, to develop the most appropriate response to their own particular situation. Chief among the recommendations are to promote the participation of older persons as citizens with full rights, and to assure that persons everywhere are able to age with security and dignity. Governments reaffirmed that the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, are essential for creating an ***inclusive society for all ages.***

For the first time, Governments agreed to link ageing to other frameworks for social and economic development and human rights. They recognized that other goals cannot be achieved unless they take into account the demographic changes that are occurring. The MIPAA thus has a strong development focus, emphasizing the need to integrate the evolving process of global ageing with the larger process of economic and social development.

Issues of older people (men and women):

It has been observed that the older women and men are left behind during evacuation because of many reasons during emergency or disasters . But the key reasons are their diminished functional ageing, low

mobility and disability that do not allow them to evacuate in emergency. Older men and women are also much involved with the household assets and property and hence fear of loss do not allows them to evacuate. In some cases older people are not prioritized or the fear of living with strangers seems to be a hurdle in evacuation.

After evacuation there are many issues of older men and women that need to be addressed, e.g. there is,

- I. Limited access to information and facilities.
- II. Food items not always age friendly
- III. Health and shelter facilities are not always inclusive.

Generally speaking in the context of Pakistan older people should have support from Government that would encourage the older people to live independently and free from economic stress.

References:

UN principles for older people

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/pdf/olderpersons.pdf>

2: HelpAge International guidelines for protection of older people

3: Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing 2002

4: HYOGO framework 2005-15

5: HelpAge, UNFPA report on the century of ageing

6: Lesson learnt of work with older people Associations