

Family Transition in South Asia: Determinants and Implications

By

Weraduwege I. De Silva

Introduction

Family may be defined as a group of persons related to a specific degree, through blood, adoption, or marriage. The difficulty is that comparative data on the family in the broad definition of the term above is not available. The available statistics relate to households, defined by location, community or living arrangements. Surveys and censuses usually cover all households, not merely family households. Nevertheless the latter type constitutes a major proportion enabling the characteristics of the totals to be identified as those of family households. Due to many demographic, socio-economic and political reasons family members may disperse, consequently, the size of the household could be reduced but not the size of the family.

In the Asian countries most of the young people after their marriage live jointly with their parents and later move to another place whenever custom imposes or economic condition of the new couple permits to do so. Lloyd and Duffy (1995) believe that, beyond this natural ebb and flow of family members, families are becoming more dispersed. Young and elderly adults, spouses, and other relatives who might otherwise have shared a home are now more likely to live apart from one another. Thus, it appears timely to review recent trends in fertility, marriage dissolution, migration and urbanization, and ageing that affecting the family transition in the South Asian societies.

Change in size and structure of the family

For practical reasons, censuses and surveys deal with the household unit rather than the family unit, since the meaning of the family differs across cultures. Households grow larger when children are born or ageing parents move in then shrink again when elderly parents die and grown children leave to start their own households (Lloyd and Duffy, 1995). A household is defined in many surveys, as a person or a group of persons that usually live and eat together. It is important to distinguish between a family, where members are related either by blood or by marriage, and a household, which involves the sharing of a housing unit, facilities and food.

Since average household size could be considered as proxy for the average family size, estimates obtained for the former is presented in table 1. A comparison of average household size over the period of 1970s/1980s to 1990s for South Asian countries in general indicates a declining trend. The largest country in the region, India, indicates a marginal decline in average household size from 5.5 to 5.4 persons during 1980s and 1990s. Over the period of 1970s/1980s to 1990s, the increase in average household size is noted for Afghanistan and

Pakistan where fertility had not declined significantly. In these countries, the nuclear family is not the norm. High fertility and social and cultural factors favour co-residence of the extended family where non-relatives also may live. Over the past three decades Sri Lanka has demonstrated a clear decline in the average household size and reported the lowest figure for the region.

Families with a large number of persons are still the norm in many South Asian countries. In the 1990s Pakistan reported the highest percentage of households (74.2 per cent) with 5 or more members (table 2). While Bangladesh, India and Nepal all indicated a marginal decline in prevalence of large households, Sri Lanka indicating the strongest decline.

With the onset of fertility decline in almost all the countries in South Asia, a strong negative impact on the prevalence of large families would soon be experienced. Thus, the declining trend in average household size would emerge in almost all countries in the region during the early part of the present century.

A few decades ago in South Asian countries, single-person households were virtually not existent. Nevertheless, consequent to population ageing, migration, social and economic changes occurring in the region, there is an emerging trend of single-person households. For example, over the last couple of years in Nepal the proportion of single-person households increased from 3.2 to 4.0 per cent (table 3).

Female-headed households

In many societies in Asia, the oldest male is designated as the head of household regardless of whether he is the primary source of economic support, the authority figure, or fulfills other tasks purportedly performed by household heads (Ayad et al., 1997). In the mean time female-headed households have become a steadily growing phenomenon in many countries in the world, including South Asia.

This increase in female-headed households could be due to variety of reasons and as Bruce and Lloyd (1992) indicated widowhood, migration, non-marital fertility and marital instability could be some of the important causes. In recent decades an increasing number of women, particularly rural women, have become heads of households because men, the traditional heads of households have gone to the war front or are working far away. Moreover, due to civil unrest and displacement, a refugee situation exists in a number of countries in the region, leaving the females to take over the task of running the household.

The highest proportion of female-headed households in South Asia could be observed in Sri Lanka where figures have increased from 19 per cent in 1990s to 20 per cent in 2000 (table 3). In Sri Lanka the increase is mainly due to political unrest and social strife in the southern areas of the country in the late 1980s, and the civil war in the north and east. Consequently, a significant number of young widows have emerged as female heads of households.

A noteworthy feature of female-headed households, goes back to size not households is that the majority of them are widowed women, and the average size of their households is comparatively smaller. As noted in the 1994 Demographic Survey of Sri Lanka, 56 per cent of

the female heads were found to be widowed while only 37 per cent were married. In contrast a mere 2 per cent of the male heads were reported to be widowed, while 95 per cent were currently married (Department of Census and Statistics, 1997).

The proportions of female-headed households are relatively low in Bangladesh and Pakistan. In Nepal and India, the proportions of female-headed households are increasing (table 3). In most South Asian societies the incidence of female-headed households was rare though they shoulder most of the household responsibilities.

Even though the data discussed above does not permit the identification of single-parent households, data from developed countries have shown that in the vast majority the single parent is the mother (Kamerman and Kahn, 1988). The households in South Asian countries too, may contain a substantial proportion of female-headed households (Lloyd and Desai, 1992).

A new social issue in many developing countries is seen in context of these female-headed households because they have mostly one adult who is solely responsible for earnings. A typical feature is that these households are smaller than male-headed households (table 4). The 1993 National Household Survey of Sri Lanka, show that 66 per cent of households in the country comprised of 1-4 members, while male-headed are estimated to be only 44 per cent. Thus, in many instances male-headed households are comprised of more than one member for economic participation. Consequent to this, female-headed households are poorer than the male-headed ones.

Determinants of change in family size and structure

Fertility change

The reduction in the average annual rate of population growth, which is a global phenomenon, primarily occurred due to reduction in fertility levels. An inevitable outcome of declining fertility rates and increasing age at first birth in most countries of the world is a reduction in family size. Although the fertility rates in the rest of the Asian countries have declined significantly, in South Asia, the decline has been much slower (Freedman, 1995). The total fertility rate (TFR) of Bhutan, Maldives and Pakistan was well over five live births per woman, even during the period of 1995-2000 (table 5). India, with the largest population in the region, still reports a TFR of over three children. Sri Lanka is the only country in South Asia, which has reached the replacement level fertility with a TFR of 2.1. It is especially noteworthy that major fertility declines in Asia have occurred in populations that are poor, with large rural proportions (Caldwell, 1993).

The aforementioned fertility decline, experienced in most South Asian countries, is due to combined effect of substantial socio-economic development achieved by those countries in the last two decades and the effective implementation of family planning programmes. The contribution of socio-economic development, to fertility decline, the result of the increasing cost of children. It was irrational to have large families. In traditional societies where human labour was a source of strength to the family, more children were preferred to less. The

emphasis was on, the quality rather than the quantity of children, a new concept added to family values. A main feature in the modern family system emerged which is the changing attitude towards the value of children. Moreover the economic benefits derived from children in a family decreased, due to the economic development path in the economy which caused structural changes in the economy promoting nonagricultural employment. Large-scale economic development, even though was experienced by the West before irreversible fertility declines occurred, the Asian experience shows that it is not always necessary for major fertility declines. Increased consumption of even moderate development by a large majority of persons as shown by various indicators which illustrate, improved health, the education of women, and advances in their status, can be the reasonable causation of Asian fertility decline.

Mortality change

Mortality declines, particularly infant mortality, everywhere preceded fertility declines. Improved survival rates of children mean that when women reached the age of 30 they increasingly had achieved the completed family size they desired. Earlier, much larger numbers of births had been required to achieve the desired completed family size. Many countries in South Asia that have achieved a low level of fertility also have a low level of infant mortality (Tables 6). Sri Lanka compared with rest of the South Asian countries reports the highest life expectancy at birth and at age 60.

Marriage dissolution

All marital unions, formal or informal constituting families in the society, do not progress through to complete the marriage cycle to reach the final dissolution through death. A considerable proportion of unions are disrupted suddenly at various points in the lifetime of married persons due to reasons such as desertion, separation or divorce. An obvious failure in family relationship is where husband and wife cease to live together.

Divorce is the final dissolution, leaving both spouses legally free to enter another marriage contract. The variety of grounds for divorce is recognized across the countries in the Asian region, and of those the two broad categories are cruelty and desertion. The law has not only initiated legal changes to enhance the status of women and their children within the family, but also it contributes largely to dissolution of unsatisfactory marriages. Separation or divorce may stigmatize a woman in Asian countries, reducing her social status and shrinking her support network, causing sometimes for community members or her ex-partner's kin, to reject her (Bruce, 1995).

In many countries in the world, the incidence of divorce is increasing and this phenomenon is no exception to the South Asia. In the last decade, as indicated by Table 7, Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka reported an increase in the proportion of divorced women in the age group 45-49. In Nepal divorce is virtually nonexistent. It is worthwhile to note that the risk of divorce is higher in younger women. This contention is supported by evidence gained from a number of Demographic and Health Surveys. Nevertheless most divorced women tend to remarry subsequently. Thus those women who are reported as divorced at latter ages of the reproductive span will remain single for the rest of their lives and live with their dependents.

As reported from Bangladesh and India divorce rates are higher at younger ages but with increasing age, those rates drop off steeply.

Divorce is sometimes thought to be the only solution to an unbearable relationship. It frees the spouse and children from a situation which may be damaging to the entire family. The fact that when a couple have children it will deter their divorce in any society is widely accepted. Even in Western societies significantly large proportion of divorced couples do not have any living children. Thus in South Asian culture, childlessness exerts a strong effect on the divorce rate (Shahidullah, 1979). However it is believed that in the last couple of years even in most of the Asian cultures a growing proportion of divorces involve couples with young children (Goode, 1993). Such a trend in marital dissolution would lead to a single parenthood as presently experienced by the western societies.

Widowhood is most likely to strike the elderly and therefore carry with it the economic problems of ageing (Table 7). Death of a spouse can result in single parenthood for women in most South Asian countries primarily due to two reasons. First, in most countries in the region, the expectation of life at birth for females is higher than that of males. Second, at the time of marriage almost all couples husband is significantly older than his wife. Since marital fertility continues even in the advance stages of the reproductive span, widows are often left with dependent children to support (Bruce, 1995).

Bangladesh reported the highest proportion of widowed women in the age group 45-49 in 1990s and show further increase. At present approximately one out of every five women in that age group are already widowed with the reported in Nepal. Countries such as Bangladesh and India indicate an increase in the incidence of widowhood, while in Nepal and Sri Lanka the opposite is true. Presumably in Sri Lanka the decline in widowhood is expected with the decrease in age difference between husband and wife. For instance age difference between male and female age at marriage in Sri Lanka in 1963 was about 6 years, while by 1981 the figure has dropped to 3.5 years (De Silva, 1997). This trend would have contributed to a reduction of the percentage of women widowed in the age 45-49.

Women's economic participation

The commercialization process which opened markets in many developing countries, has succeeded in replacing the traditional cooperation in economic relationship, with that of competition. In this process, the social institutions in these countries found themselves in conflict with the key aspects of the new economic systems. The family, as a social institution, has been a major victim in this respect (Wijewardena, 1996).

The economics of the family and the sexual division of labour within the family are very much determined by opportunities in the labour market. The main economic system itself has facilitated the removal of women from household chores and their entrance in the labour market. The market has invented a number of new labour-saving methods to enable women to supply their labour in the market (table 8).

Furthermore, deregulation of labour markets has resulted in weakening income and employment security and the “feminization” of many jobs traditionally held by men (Standing, 1989). The declining ability of men to earn a “family wage” along with growing need of cash for family maintenance has resulted in an increasing proportion of female members (particularly wife) in the family to engage in economic activities (Lloyed & Duffy, 1995).

How strongly the “feminization” of the labour market took place in South Asia? The highest female share of the labour force in 1970 was noted in Bangladesh while the least was noted in Pakistan (table 8). In almost all the countries in South Asia an increase in the women’s share in the labour force is shown.

The increase of divorce and separation, female-headed households and single-parent households all indicate the pressure on females, particularly on mothers to engage in economic activities to maintain the family unit. However the income that she receives in many instances is not sufficient to maintain her family. This trend could be noted as “feminization of poverty” in which the poorest quartiles of society are increasingly made up of women and children.

Mothers throughout the region are expected to carry-out significant domestic workload which is vital forms of economic production, though often not remunerated in cash. When both wage-earning and non-wage-earning forms of economic activities are accounted for it, becomes evident that mothers provide a substantial or sole economic support to a larger proportion of families in the region (Bruce, 1995).

Migration and urbanization

International migration is about the movement of people beyond the defined boundaries of a country. Population movements beyond country boundaries, especially in the South Asian region have increased, particularly during the period encompassing, the last two to three decades. Issues relating to international migrants have become extremely important in international relations. Some of the major causes of such migratory trends are, increasing globalization, economic interdependence, rapid population growth, and ecological deterioration, civil war ethnic and religious conflicts and worsening of poverty.

International migration

The out migration process of professionally qualified persons, in search of employment overseas, from South Asian countries to the United Kingdom, North America and Australia, dates back to late 1960s. In recent decades, labour migrants, refugees and asylum seekers have migrated largely because of prevailing internal strife in the region (table 9). Since 1995, Canada, Australia and New Zealand have opened new avenues for permanent migration to their countries, opening doors for all these types of migrants and paving way for thousands of professionally and technically qualified persons to migrate to these countries. Such induced migration more or less has amounted to massive brain drain from the third world countries (Skeldon, 1993). Contract labour migration involves most countries of South Asia. However the major players are Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

The impact of international migration on family

A large proportion of short term migrant labour of both males and females came from poverty stricken families. The intention of these migrants was purely to achieve a better livelihood for the families. A majority of the migrants were migrating for the first time which indicated that they were inexperienced and had only an average level of education. A large percentage of such persons especially females were either semi skilled or unskilled. Unskilled labour was provided largely by females who migrated as housemaids. Intentions of some of the migrants to achieve a better livelihood were never achieved because of the absence of knowledge and guidance to utilize the earned foreign exchange at a maximum scale.

Contract migration required a temporary separation from the family, and living in a culturally, ethnically and religiously different environment in the host country. Neither male nor female migrants to the Middle East are usually accompanied by their families (Ministry of Finance and Planning, 1996). For successful implementation of such a migration policy training for migrants and an adequate comprehension of cultural differences at the social point of destination for the migrants, and training for adjustment and coping during the period of absence for the family at the point of destination, avenues for alternative service provision for the family is required. Nevertheless mechanisms for such training were not in place at the point of origin or at the point of destination, during the initial phase of the process of contract migration. Since then some of the countries have attempted to put in place some administrative mechanisms to impart the necessary training and adjustment.

There seems to be a sharp impact of temporary migration for families of female migrants and for the migrants themselves. In Sri Lanka the proportion of married persons among total migrants has been estimated to run between 50 and 70 percent, however overwhelmingly large proportion of female migrants are married.

Within Sri Lanka, in the last quarter of 1995, various reports of the news media, throw light on the dimension of the social impact of the migrant family. During the observed period of three months, forty-nine migration-related adverse incidents had been reported in the daily newspapers. Such incidents included thirteen suicides and deaths of the migrant or members of the family. Others such as clandestine love affairs (migrant or spouse) and instances of abandoning the family have been observed. Some of the evidence available at the Foreign Employment Bureau of Sri Lanka also establishes some of these contentions. The tabulations presented in this article provide useful insights into several aspects which are often overlooked in mapping out policy which looks at migration for employment as one answer for high levels of prevailing unemployment in some of the countries of origin. The magnitude and dimension of the social consequences demand a serious in-depth investigation into the issue from the socio-cultural angle. The negative consequences of labor exports particularly of female migration have led to vocal lobbies urging a ban or regulation of such movement from time to time (Ministry of finance and planning, 1996).

Evidence of stress and strain is becoming increasingly evident in marital and family relationships. Successive empirical investigations have demonstrated, that the costly price paid by families in question were in the form of disruption of family life and disorientation of

matrimonial and social relationships (Ministry of finance and planning, 1996; Eckenrode and Gore, 1990). Incidents of family break-up due to migration are reported to be increasing. Sociologists have found a high potential towards Bigamy or Polygamy due to separation of married couples as a result of migration. The past experiences in Sri Lanka show that the divorce rate is higher among migrant families (Dias 1984). Another survey conducted in Sri Lanka (Hettige, 1992) indicated that wasteful consumption, epidemic of alcoholism and gambling, devaluation of the moral values of migrant women, particularly the unmarried, and the problem of social reintegration upon return are among negative effects highlighted. These are “Symptomatic’ of the emigrant social order” (Hettige, 1992). The consequences of male out migration have also been observed, which if considered the numbers would be certainly higher. Cases of men gambling and wasting money, obliging their wives to repeat migration as a mode of survival were also noted in this Survey.

Transfer of the dependency burden of the family from the younger to older generations in the short run is an immediate outcome of the migration of prime working-age members of the family. This change in the age composition of the family occurs with a skewed effect in the direction of the bulged proportion of older persons in the family. (UNESCO 1982; De Silva, 1994).

Transference of decision-making in the family from traditional male heads of household to female members who are earning substantial incomes for the family from foreign employment is observed. Emergence of a new phenomenon in the form of female-dominated household planning has emerged as a significant feature among some of the migrant families. Women’s contribution to the household economy in the poor South Asian countries is not well documented and hitherto unrecognized in the national accounts (Bruce, 1995). In recent years this contribution enhanced in terms of foreign remittances brought in to these poor countries, creating a new socio-economic scenario which significantly increased the account and recognized economic role of women in the community and family structure of the region.

The majority of migrants for temporary employment abroad are married and have left their spouses and children behind. The duration of stay by migrants in Middle Eastern countries is approximately 2 -3 years with the opportunity for home leave on completion of one years work. The workers long absences from their households especially in the case of married persons with young children make it necessary for them to seek the assistance of one parent or other siblings to attend to the needs of the young children and to assist the spouse left behind. When an immediate family member is not available, the assistance of distant relatives is sought.

A parallel development is the more active participation of the male spouse in multiple family roles hitherto performed by females only, particularly in families where married women have migrated. A redistribution of responsibilities among other members of the family has taken place to a very large degree the migrant’s spouse takes over some of the additional responsibilities (child care, marketing etc.). In some instances, such redistribution of family responsibilities within the family had a negative effect. For example the elder child may be discontinued from schooling to look after the young siblings left behind or to attend to other

household chores (De Silva, 1998). Such instances are a matter of concern and have caused a breakdown of the family ties and family disruption

The consequences of parental out-migration for extended periods have to be seen in their manifold dimensions. In Sri Lanka for example, if a rough estimate could be made for 1996 on the basis of the SLBFE estimates, the stock of contract workers currently abroad amounts to 550,000. A survey of 224 children left behind by their mothers revealed that 80% of them were less than 15 years of age (Fernando 1996). Such separations had lasting repercussion on the child's personality development, conduct, performance in studies and even attitudes to society and life. Experiences of socio-economic, cultural and psychological impacts of contract migration on the immediate family system in Sri Lanka, is also high lighted in several surveys (Fernando, 1989). Hettige (1992) refers to psychological and behavioral problems of children; deterioration of parent child relationships etc. Interviews with doctors and counselors reported in the same study in Sri Lanka bring out the concern expressed by health, nutritional and education experts over these negative aspects of the migration phenomenon. The extent to which surrogate parents can make up for deprivation of maternal care is a controversial issue. In urban areas where the extended family system is more diluted adverse impact of children would be stronger (Fernando 1989).

The social impact of return migration is mainly related with reintegration and social adjustment of returnees. Problems of readjustment/reintegration of the returnee migrant to the family and community appear to have visible manifestations, because of prolonged exposure of that member of the family to work and living away from the family. For example a higher incidence of divorce is reported among migrants. The incidence of divorce and separation was found to be higher in the first year after return. One conclusion can be that, migration has a negative effect on marital stability (Ministry of Finance and Planning, 1996).

The importance of the family as a component of society needs no emphasis but the mention of policy issues have not received the policy attention that the phenomenon in fact deserves. Migration of family members can have favorable or adverse effects depending on the circumstances. Provisions made by households to cope with the void created by the migration of a family member is a dimension which has a far reaching social impact.

Internal migration

Internal migration may be defined as movement of people from one geographical area to another within an internationally recognized state border. Two such migration streams may be rural to urban and rural to rural migration.

Rural to urban migration enhances the process of urbanization and is inevitably linked to the process of economic development. The flow of people from rural to urban areas occur largely for economic reasons. Nevertheless there are other reasons such as the need to consume better educational or health services available in urban areas that function as pull factors to draw people from rural areas to urban areas. Two other reasons contributing to urban population growth may be changes in administrative boundaries which cause physical expansion of urban and natural increase of population that occur in urban areas. In India during

the period 1981 to 1991 in-migration process accounted for at least 34 percent of the urban growth (Mathur 1992).

Social and economic disparities and lack of job opportunities in rural areas have resulted in the increased rural to urban migration in many South Asian countries (Perera, 1992). The process of urbanization may be described as an irreversible process. Emergence of “the big city” phenomenon in Asian countries is linked to large-scale rural to urban migration in Asian countries. Such a migration pattern occurs within the framework of high population growth in which the agriculture sector is unable to absorb the additional labour supply of the growing rural population. Syed (1992) notes “population mobility whether between or within the rural and urban sectors, is related to sustainable development. People who moved out of unsustainable systems in rural areas to rapidly growing urban centres often move into urban poverty. Thus development planners are faced with problems of growing demands on inadequate urban infrastructure. The vicious circle of poverty continues to move from rural to urban areas. Such mass poverty associated with the process of urbanization requires immediate attention and urgent solutions.

The impact of internal migration on family

As much as there is a substantial impact of international migration on the family, internal migration also affects the structure and the functions of the family. For married women the chances to break out from a confined role appear to be greater in urban than in rural areas. They can evade the direct control of their family, causing traditional family structures to collapse and paving the way for the development of new ones (Findley and Williams, 1991). Such outcomes are particularly important in patrilineal and patrilocal societies, when migration results in living away from the woman’s in-laws which in turn encourage the development of more intimate and egalitarian relationships between the husband and wife. Thus a study of urban neighborhoods in a city in northern India found that the trend towards the incorporation of married women into their husband’s kin network was weak; nevertheless stronger ties were observed between the women concerned and the family of origin than was typical in traditional rural India (Perera, 1992).

Married women migrating from rural to urban areas of South Asian countries often experience not only a transition from an extended to a nuclear family but also an important change in the nature of their economic activity. From being unpaid family workers, they become wage earners. Such change is likely to enhance the independences of women and to strengthen their role in decision making within the family. In general the higher a women’s income as a proportion of total family income is, the more power she holds in the family (Perera, 1992).

Urbanization and the effects on family

Increased proportions of population residing in urban areas of South Asian countries, observed during last two decades, and with a potential for faster growth in the immediate future (Table 10) is a major development trend affecting families. The urbanization process tended to influence the stabilization process of the nucleation of the family system because of urban

congestion and the housing patterns particularly of the low income groups. Demographic transition occurring in some of the South Asian countries had reached a stage of low mortality and low fertility (tending towards replacement level fertility) tended to enhance the process of family nucleation. A gradual collapse of the extended family system in these countries tended to create new problems of family support for the young dependents and the elderly in the family. Time series data showing the age structure of urban areas of South Asian countries, show that the proportion of elderly had increased and the proportion of working-age population and the proportion of working parents is high. Moreover consequent to rural to urban migration and rapid urbanization process a small average household size is observed for urban areas, compared to rural, in most of the South Asian countries (table 11).

Adoption of urban lifestyles tended to influence changes in the quality of food consumed in the family. The adoption of fast food culture for convenience and increased preferences for such food types particularly among the younger generations, and stress from work and family tended to change the epidemiological profile of the urban population in the region by increasing the mortality and morbidity rates due to diseases originating from lifestyle changes (Eckenrode and Gore, 1990).

Various types of unhealthy housing, prevalent in urban areas caused unhealthy life styles in the family. Living with congestion and pollution have more or less become a way of life for families living in slum and shanty dwellings. Unplanned industrial development in urban areas, and the resultant over urbanization seen in most of the major cities and other urban centres of South Asia have caused massive environmental degradation and pollution problems. Provision of necessary services, safe water supply, sewerage and other services and facilities for the families living in urban areas, have become major problems for urban planners.

Ageing and retirement

Population ageing is emerging as a serious problem in many South Asian countries. These trends have interacted with major changes in patterns of individual and family life. In combination with economic development and social change, increases in the average lifetime of the individual allow for greater time spent in family roles. (United Nations, 1994)

Improvements in mortality have contributed to higher survivorship of the populations. Adoption of new techniques to combat infectious diseases has resulted in increases in infant and child survival during the first half of the twentieth century. In more recent years a dramatic turn of demographic events is experienced, when longevity of older ages, is shown as an outcome.

The demographic ageing process and the resultant issues are an outcome of irreversible changes experienced by the components of population growth in the region. Among the observed effects of mortality decline are the changes that occurred in fertility. In addition to the effects of the social change the success of family planning programmes contributed to a decline in fertility. Lower fertility had an indirect effect on the elderly issue as the proportion of the elderly to the total population began to rise. International migration of younger persons further aggravated the situation. The age selectivity of migration skewing towards younger

ages contributed to marking the proportion of elderly population significant in relation to the other age segments of the total population (United Nations, 1999).

Comparative to any country in the South Asian region, the highest proportion of elderly population i.e. those persons of age 60 years and more, is reported to be in Sri Lanka. The medium variant projection show that this proportion would increase to 18 per cent by 2025 (table 12). The least affected country by ageing is Afghanistan where at present less than 5 per cent of the population is enumerated as elderly. Nevertheless, owing to advanced stages of demographic transition that occurred in the country by 2025, Sri Lanka will have the highest proportion of elderly persons (De Silva, 1994).

In South Asian countries the growth rate of the population aged 60 and above exceeds the growth rate of the national populations. More significant is the progressive upward trend in the growth rate of the elderly and declining trends in national growth rates. Projections indicate a pronounced increase in the elderly population in the decades to follow. Growth of the elderly population, relative to the prime age segment, of the total population has led to changes in the dependency ratios. The effects of these changes are that increasingly large proportions of the aged (those who are more than 60 years) will be increasingly dependent on a gradually declining proportion of the working age population (those who are in the age group 15 to 59 years). Associated with these trends effecting the economy are implications related to family support of elderly, as one would anticipate a fewer persons in the younger generation would be available to support and care for the growing number of the elderly in the family. (United Nations, 1999). Potential supply ratios, which measure the number of persons in the working ages per every elderly person, have declined in most countries in the South Asia (table 13). The support ratio will decline significantly in the next two decades and Sri Lanka could experience the highest decline.

The elderly in South Asian countries face many problems such as insolvency, loss of authority, social insecurity, insufficient recreational facilities, lack of overall physical and mental care problems associated with living arrangements etc. Ultimately these problems affect the family.

Impact of ageing on family

Caring for older persons seems to have other implications that are an outcome of changing societal norms and the resultant changes that had taken effect within families. Despite the fact that the children, in the region as a whole, are given high priority, the traditional obligations towards parents and the duty bound conscience, to provide them with the love and care that they deserve in their twilight years of life, are now difficult to fulfill. The prospect of the younger generation living with their parents is becoming increasingly difficult if not impractical as the search for employment opportunities take them more to locations away from their homes and to distant lands. (United Nations, 1999)

The process of ageing at a point in time leads to loss of occupation, resulting in loss of income, in most cases, causing economic hardship in old age. With the sole means of survival the income from occupation, as is the case of majority, this would undoubtedly be a hard blow.

Not only will the self-sufficiency and economic independence of the person be lost, but also his/her overall standard of living would decline. The contention that, old age is often characterized by diminishing income is postulated by the age income cycle theory, which proposes that relative to the income of a person's working life, the income of those at retirement is low.

The bulk of employment in South Asian countries is in the agricultural sector. A large majority of persons are employed as casual and regular laborers, farmers, part-time workers and other types of wage laborers, self employed persons, domestic labour and other minor employees. These types of traditional occupations bring only a marginal income, sufficient for one to lead a hand to mouth existence. Hence at retirement, low income earning segments of the labour force become more vulnerable to economic hazards (Perera, 1989).

In the South Asian countries, a substantial proportion of the working age populations, who are in the non-formal sector, are left without a secure definite source of income, in their old age. This category includes those who have been employed in the non permanent subsidiary industries. Chronic levels of unemployment prevailing in the region entail that in South Asian countries, most of the older persons are not working in recent times.

After retirement a major proportion of people and their families, feel additional economic hardship (United Nations, 1999). In the rural sector, the proportion engaged in agricultural, self-employment is observed to be highest in Sri Lanka with 42 per cent, followed by Bangladesh and Pakistan with 21 per cent and 10 per cent respectively (table 14). Only the government servants and employees in the private sector are assured of a pension or a superannuation benefit. The degree of benefits at retirement is directly linked to the type of employment of persons (Chen and Jones, 1989).

In South Asian countries, there has been a long tradition of supporting the elderly members of the family; a feature which is still the dominant, providing economic security for the majority of elderly in the rural areas. Nevertheless, the changing family patterns and size, in the modern times, have negated this security blanket of the elderly. The reduction of the family size could be attributed partly to the economic difficulties, the low level of income, the high cost of living, the costs of education of children and the need to maintain a better standard of living, which is best achieved within the reduced and affordable smaller size family. Consequently, the nuclear family with its parents and children became the model of society and soon ruled out the traditional, extended, family usually constituting three generations. The direct outcome of such a situation is the decrease in the quantum of the family support and protection provided for the aged.

There is a wide variety of family forms in Asia's diverse cultures, perhaps with more variations now than in the past. Demographic change has altered membership of families in terms of the numbers, types and characteristics of kin, both within and across generations, and also in the age structure. Despite that, the institution of family is the basic institution around which societies organize themselves. Changes in family structures would, therefore, affect the care and support of the elderly (Tan, 1992).

There is a long standing family tradition of mutual support between the elderly and other family members, in Asian countries. It is therefore important to be aware of the demographic, social and economic facets of such mutual support, which are interrelated with the continuous concern, ability and participation of the elderly to play an active role through support given to the family matters including through the family budget. Such support given by the elderly reflects not only their concern for the well-being of the family, but also their ability to work. To understand the demographic and socio-economic dimension of support given by the elderly, consumption patterns of the family resources out of the total earnings, and the patterns of savings of the family has to be examined (United Nations, 1997).

The past experience of Pakistan shows that monetary assistance had been given to the family budget by older persons from their savings. In such instances the economic status of elderly is positively associated with their ability to be self-sufficient in basic needs. Data from the same country show that the financial contribution of the older persons to the family budget is positively associated with their good health, and other variables such as, not being too old, being relatively more educated, starting work after completing a longer working life, being self-sufficient in basic needs, having a higher income at age 50, having family help in working (not monetary) and children not being self-sufficient in basic needs. To achieve such a secure situation, it is assumed that the elderly drew at least some money from their savings accumulated over their working lives. Those who worked as employees of some organization may also have some money from employment but the pensions paid in Pakistan are generally too small (United Nations, 1997)

Details of the replies given by the elderly to questions asked, in a survey in Pakistan, whether they helped their children in income generating work, with or without getting paid, is contained in table 15. Of the elderly males questioned, 191 persons said that they did help in their children's income generating activities, but without being paid. This may also imply that the help was given in a family enterprise or work situation. Only 11 elderly males said that they were paid for their work contribution. The remainder either gave a negative reply or no response was available. The mean income of those who contributed to the work of their children was higher than those who did not do so.

Among the elderly females, 81 said that they helped their children without getting paid, only one woman said that she was paid for her work (table 15). The remainder either gave a negative reply to the question or did not respond because they were not economically active (United Nations, 1997).

The need to restructure family roles is increasingly evident. In spite of the fact that we are confronted in our daily lives with the children, parents and spouses, the previous role definition and responsibility no longer "fit".

A large majority of elderly Sri Lankans are cared for by their families, in most cases by co-residing children. More than 80 per cent of the elderly aged over 60 years live with their children and two thirds live in house holds with at least four other people. In this environment most elderly are expected to be cared for in their children's households.

In traditional peasant agrarian societies, production tends to be family-based and unspecialized (Ogawa and Rutherford 1994). Successive generations tend to have the same occupation, typically farming. Parental authority over children is reinforced by a parent's greater experience and expertise, and co-residence of parents and adult children makes both economic and social sense. With modernization, production shifts to a more specialized process, modern market economies are dependent on an inherent division of labour. Increasing individualism in the labour market eventually diffuses into other areas of life, including the legal system, family relations and social values. Parental authority of elderly parents over adult children loosens, and generally weakens most of its economic and legal basis. Changing outlooks, the need for adult children, to move in search of employment, results in a decline in the coexistence of multi-generational members of the family. This is particularly the case in the event of rapid urbanization, where the members of the extended family living in rural areas are left behind in rural areas, as children move to the cities. This is an important process affecting the family structure (IPS, 1998).

Increased schooling may break down traditional values and norms, including the family values which entails a specific obligation for the children to support and care for their elderly parents. Although the evidence for such effects remains incomplete, such situations may occur due to two reasons. First, increased schooling results in children spending less time receiving care and guidance from their parents, and hence the feeling of a debt towards the parents is reduced. Second, because the content in formal schooling, which in some developing countries is heavily westernized, the system tends to inculcate western values of individualism and self-realization (Caldwell, 1980). Both processes make the younger generation less willing to sacrifice their time to provide physical care for their elderly parents (Mason, 1992). This may be a major problem in the family in relation to care giving aspects of old age support.

With further development, are the elderly in South Asia less likely to receive care and support from their children? The answer given by most experts on ageing in South Asia is a qualified "yes". Norms about the care of the elderly by their children were traditional and strong in most of South Asia and appear to remain strong. Despite this, traditional patterns of co-residence are eroding in many countries. There are also isolated reports of physical separations between elderly parents and their children contributing to the neglect of the elderly. Intergenerational co-residence and support of the elderly by their children also appears to be less common in the more "modernized" sectors of the population suggesting that as societies modernize, the traditional intergenerational relationship will tend to break down. Thus although family support and care of the elderly are unlikely to disappear in the near future, family care of the elderly seems to be decreasing as the countries and areas of the South Asian region indicates (Mason, 1992).

Current levels and patterns of the prevalence of disability among the elderly needs to be assessed appropriate. Mobility is one of the first things to be affected by disability. In old age the usual weaknesses are worsened by disabilities. With increasing numbers of elderly, the proportionate number of the disabled among them, is likely to grow (United Nations, 1996). This impact is a major economic hardship for many South Asian families, because a major proportion of South Asian families are poor or very poor.

Impact of aging on health care costs

Population ageing leads to increased health care costs in South Asian countries. The impact on government health expenditures, as well as from an overall societal perspectives and the impact on household expenditures.

After the age of 65 years, the probability of disability or of impairment in general functioning increases dramatically. While people are increasingly living beyond seventy years of age, the increased life expectancy is not necessarily additional years of life free of disability. As the number of disabled elderly increases, these individuals will need additional support in order to maintain themselves (Rannan-Eliya and others., 1998).

Within the domain of extended family relationships, the concern expressed and help given by the family members during sickness or disability of the aged is usually more conspicuous. In fact, the main source of social security for the elderly is comprised of physical, emotional and monetary support provided by the family or close relations (United Nations, 1996).

The traditional solidarity between generations who work through the institutions of the family and who receive further motivation from religious and cultural values has so far worked in Pakistan to ensure a sufficient level of social security. Such mutual help has not only been prevalent for the sustenance of family social and economic ties but has also extended beyond the domains of the family to the community level especially at the time of marriages, sickness, old age disability and in emergencies (United Nations, 1997).

The problem of care for the elderly is likely to be especially acute for older women, who constitute the majority of the elderly in virtually all low mortality populations (Andrews and Hennink, 1992; Martin, 1988). Because of greater longevity among women in most countries in Asia, and the tendency for men to marry women younger than themselves, women are more likely than men to end their lives as widows. The implication of this is a serious gender asymmetry in the support and care of the elderly (Martin, 1988).

In many South Asian countries, because of increased life expectancy of women in relation to men and higher proportions of widowed divorced or lonely among the women, the economic and social problems for women are worse than for men in many cases. The incidence of marriage among elderly women being low, their economic dependence on others is higher, especially in populations where female economic activity in general is low. With increasing physical and mental capacity, their economic dependence on family members is more than men. The prolonged care of such women (because of longer life span) necessitate that those on whom they depend for livelihood, should have sufficient financial resources (United Nations, 1996).

Implications: social services and social protection

Social services refer to programmes that help people deal with various social problems. (Gilbert and others, 1980). Social services are new responses to new social institutions and

therefore the field of social services is expanding. Social security incorporates programmes providing social welfare that directed to help people who could not meet their needs by open market system or the family.

According to some schools on welfare people can meet their basic needs through two mechanisms. One is the family and the other is the market. When a person fails to meet his basic needs through those mechanisms, social welfare comes to his help. This is specially done through the state. Therefore the state was known as the welfare state. The welfare state can be defined as a country with legislation and programmes that protect and support citizens with special needs through governmental provision of direct services to improve the quality of life for all. However for various reasons, the welfare state is in a crisis.

According to some writers (Taylor-Gooby and Dale, 1985), though there is an uncertainty and instability they are uncertain attributes of the modern welfare society and should not consider as a crisis. The major contributory factor for the crisis is the scarcity of resources. This is much more applicable to developing countries.

Most welfare programmes are remedial in nature making recipients of welfare services dependents. Therefore, social services had become a burden on national economies. Slower economic growth rate have forced national governments to borrow money from international agencies such as IMF and World Bank. Especially these two organizations advise governments to cut down expenditure on social services. Therefore some experts on social services suggest community based services as an able alternative (Jim Ife, 1995). However without government assistance and support community will not be able to initiate welfare services of their own, though they are much needed by the people in developing countries.

Owing to many reasons, the modern nuclear family is in a crisis and thus is making the provision social services more urgent. For instance, caring the older persons in the family is becoming a problem. The decrease in family size, migration of younger members to urban centers for employment, problems of housing in urban centers and the high cost of living are some of the factors affecting the traditional support system. As a result, greater demands are made on the welfare system of the government in view of the increasing number of elders with greater dependents ration. Nevertheless, in Sri Lanka still the family is the major institution which looks after elders. The Department of Social Services in Sri Lanka with the help of the NGO sector looks after the welfare of the aged people. Furthermore, the government of Sri Lanka introduced a National Policy and Plan of Action for the welfare of the older persons which emphasized to prepare the population for a productive and fulfilling life at old age socially, economically, physically and spiritually and to ensure independence, participation, care, self-fulfilment and dignity for those in old age.

An act of parliament was enacted to protect the rights of the elderly in Sri Lanka in 2000. Until the enactment of the Elders Act of 2000 there was no specific legislation to provide general social and financial security for older persons. This is an important policy initiative by the government which paved way to establish a National Council for Elders and a Secretariat to assist implementation of its policies and the establishment of a National Fund for Welfare of

Elders. One of the salient features of this act is the indigent elders to receive maintenance from children through the Boards appointed under the act for determination of such claims by elders.

Though as far as 1947, a social security system was proposed by a commission (commission on social services - Sectional Paper VII), however, Sri Lanka does not have a security programme which covers the total population. Public servants as well as some other categories are eligible for pension and some other employees are eligible for Provident Fund and Employees Trust Fund. In 1987 legal provisions were made to credit a social security system for farmers and fishermen. However, these provisions are existed for the working population. The majority of the populations are non-workers in the sense that who do not work as paid workers are not covered by any social security system in Sri Lanka. Therefore, it is of great urgency to introduce a social security system in the country.

Unemployment and underemployment is a common problem in almost all the developing countries. Unemployment makes people unalterable and harms their self-esteem and dignity. Further unemployment contributes to many other social evils such as crime, prostitution, child abuse etc.

Though the governments are highly depending on the private sector for job opportunities, it is not happening mostly in the Asian Region. Social responsibility of the private sector is not recognized as a priority and thus, they are only taking interest in making a maximum profit. Therefore, governments in the region must take the initiative to implement development projects that can absorb the existing labour force. However, owing to new trends in the open economic policies of the countries in the region, governments are reluctant to take the responsibility of unemployment problem and in fact such problems are being transferred to the private sector. The available alternative to government is the introduction of a social insurance policy. Such an insurance system could cover unemployment, old age, family allowances, health and maternity, disability insurance and workmen compensation.

Free health care is available in Sri Lanka for a significantly long period of time. Among the various countries in the region, Sri Lanka has the best health facilities according to the health indicators such as infant mortality, life expectancy, etc. However, malnutrition among children and pregnant women, prevalence of degenerative diseases, mental disorders and suicides are significant issues. Owing to lack of resources, the Sri Lankan Government is unable to meet the heavy demand for the state sector health facilities and thus is seeking out the private sector to deliver more health services. Private sector health services are much more modernized but are inaccessible to the common people. Therefore, government intervention is very necessary in the South Asian countries, to strengthen and support the functions that families perform through formulating family policies within the framework of socio-economic development, in the areas of social protection against poverty and health, so problems arising through family transition could be minimized.

References

- Andrews, G.R. and M.M. Hennink (1992). "The circumstances and contributions of older people in three Asian countries: Preliminary results of a cross national study", *Asia-Pacific Population Journal*, vol. 7, No. 3, pp.127-146.
- Ayad, M., B. Barrere and J. Otto (1997). *Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics of Households*, DHS Comparative Studies, No. 26, Maryland: Macro International Inc.
- Bruce, J. (1995). "The economics of motherhood", in *Families in Focus: New Perspectives on Mothers, Fathers, and Children*, pp. 25-47, New York: The Population Council.
- Bruce, J. and C.B. Lloyd (1992). *Finding the ties that bind: Beyond headship and household*, Working Papers, No. 41, New York: The Population Council.
- Caldwell, J.C. (1980). "Mass education as a determinant of the timing of fertility decline", *Population and Development Review*, vol. 6, pp. 225-255.
- Caldwell, J.C. (1993). The Asian fertility revolution: its implications for transition theories, in Richard Leete and Iqbal Alam, eds, *The Revolution in Asian Fertility: Dimensions, Causes, and Implications*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Chen, A.J. and G. Jones (1989). *Ageing in ASEAN: Its Socio-economic Consequences*, Singapore: Institute of South Asian Studies.
- De Silva, W.I. (1998). "Socio-economic changes and adolescent issues in the Asian and Pacific Region", in *Report and Recommendations of the Expert Group Meeting on Adolescents: Implications of Population Trends, Environment, and Development*, Asian Population Studies Series, No.149, pp. 46-81, United Nations, New York.
- De Silva, W.I. (1997). "The Ireland of Asia; trends in marriage timing in Sri Lanka", *Asia-Pacific Population Journal*, vol. 12, No. 2, pp. 3-24.
- De Silva, W.I. (1994). "How serious ageing in Sri Lanka and what can be done about it?", *Asia-Pacific Population Journal*, vol. 9, No. 1, pp. 19-36.
- Department of Census and Statistics (1997). *Changing Role of Women in Sri Lanka*, Colombo.
- Dias M. (1984). *Migration to Middle East: Sri Lanka Case Study*, prepared for UNESCO, Colombo.
- Eckenrode, J. and S. Gore (1990). *Stress between Work and Family*, New York: Plenum Press.
- Fernando K. (1989). "Migration of Muslim women", *Migrant Housemaid*, vol. 28, No. 2, pp. 75-88. Colombo:Centre for Society and Religion.
- Fernando, S. (1996). *Economic Review*, Colombo: People's Bank.
- Findly, S. E. and L. Williams (1991). *Women Who Go and Women Who Stay; Reflections of a Family Migration Processes in a Changing World*, Population and labour Policies Programme, working paper No. 176, Geneva: International Labour Office.
- Giddens A., (1993). *Sociology*, (3rd ed.), London: Polity Press.
- Gilbert, N., H. Miller and H. Specht, (1980). *An Introduction to Social Work Practice*, New Jersey: Practice Hall.

- Goode, W.J. (1993). *World Change in Divorce Patterns*, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Hettige, S.T. (1992). Migrant women as change agents, Paper submitted at the 4th Sri Lankan Women's Convention, Colombo, March.
- Institute of Policy Studies (1998). *Social and Economic Implications of Ageing for Sri Lanka*, Colombo.
- Kamerman, S.B. and J.K. Kahn (1988). "What Europe does for single-parent families", *Public Interest*, vol. 93, pp. 70-86.
- Lloyd, C.B. and S. Desai (1992). "Children's living arrangements in developing countries", *Population Research and Policy Review*, vol. 11, pp. 193-216.
- Lloyd, C.B. and N. Duffy (1995). "Families in transition", in *Families in Focus: New Perspectives on Mothers, Fathers, and Children*, pp. 5-23, New York: The Population Council.
- Martin, L.G. (1988). "The ageing of Asia", *Journal of Gerontology: Social Science*, vol. 43, pp. 99-113.
- Mason, K.O. (1992). "Family change and support of the elderly in Asia: what do we know?" *Asia-Pacific Population Journal*, vol. 7, No. 3, pp.13-32.
- Ministry of Finance And Planning (1996). *Study on Migrant Workers: A Literature Survey and Identification of Data Needs and Policy Actions*, Colombo.
- Naveen, M. (2001). *Population in South Asia: Migration as a Survival Strategy*, Delhi: Authors Press.
- Ogawa, N. and D.R. Ratherford, (1994). *Care of the Elderly in Japan: Changing Norms and Expectations*, Tokyo: Nihon University.
- Perera, P.D.A. (1989). *The Aging in Sri Lanka: Misconceptions, Policies and Programmes*, Colombo: Marga Institute.
- Perera. P. D. A. (1992). Migration and its implications for socio-economic development policies, paper submitted at the Fourth Asian and Pacific Population Conference, Indonesia; 19-27 August.
- Shahidullah, M. (1979). Differential nuptiality patterns in Bangladesh, unpublished M.A. thesis, Development Studies Centre, Australian National University, Canberra.
- Shaikh, K. (1998). "The social and demographic correlates of divorce in rural Bangladesh", *Asia Pacific Population Journal*, vol. 13, No. 3, pp. 23-40.
- Skeldon, R. (1993). "Internal and international migration and its implications for socio-economic development policies", in *The Forth Asian and Pacific Population Conference 1992: Selected Papers*, New York: United Nations.
- Standing, G. (1989). "Global feminization through flexible labour", *World Development*, vol. 17, No. 7, pp. 1077-1095.
- Syed, A. (1992). Urbanization and its implications in Asian countries, paper presented at pre-conference Seminar on Migration and Urbanization, Seoul, January.
- Tan, P.C. (1992). "Implications of changing family structure on old-age support in the ESCAP region", *Asia-Pacific Population Journal*, vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 49-66.

Taylor-Gooby, P. and J. Dale (1985). *Public Opinion, Ideology and State Welfare*, London: Rontledge & Kegan Paul.

United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (1982). *Migration to the Middle East: Internal Migration Link to International Migration*, Bangkok.

United Nations (1994). *Ageing and the Family*, New York.

United Nations (1996). *Population Ageing and Development*, Asian Population Studies, No. 140, New York.

United Nations (1997). *Some Problems and Issues of Older Persons in Asia and the Pacific*, Asian Population Studies, No. 144, New York.

United Nations (1999). *The Family and Older Persons in Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka*, Asian Population Studies, No. 151, New York..

Wijewardena, W.A. (1996). The changing economic role of the family, *Economic Review*, Colombo: Peoples Bank.

World Bank (1995). *World Development Report*, New York.

Table 1: Average household size in South Asian countries

<i>Region and Country</i>	1970s	1980s	1990s
South Asia			
Afghanistan	-	5.9	7.4
Bangladesh	-	5.7	5.2
India	-	5.5	5.4
Nepal	5.5	5.8	5.5
Pakistan	5.7	6.6	6.7
Sri Lanka	5.2	4.9	4.5

Note: a - 1995.

Source: Demographic Yearbooks 1973, 1987, 1995: UN.ORG – habrdd;
DHS Data Base.

Table 2: Households with five or more members in South Asian countries

	Per cent households with five or more members (5+)	
	1990s	Around 2000
South Asia		
Bangladesh	60.2	57.4
India	63.4	59.0
Nepal	62.1	59.5
Pakistan	74.2	-
Sri Lanka	52.6	46.6

Source: DHS Data Base

Table 3: Per cent of single person households and households headed by women in South Asian countries

	Per cent of single person households		Per cent of households headed by women	
	1990s	Around 2000	1990s	Around 2000
South Asia				
Bangladesh	1.2	1.5	8.0	8.0
India	2.8	3.1	9.0	10.0
Nepal	3.2	4.0	12.0	16.0
Pakistan	2.9	-	7.0	-
Sri Lanka	3.3	3.7	19.2	20.4

Source: DHS Data Base

Table 4: Heads of household by household size, Sri Lanka, 1993

Household size	Women heads	Men heads	Total
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
1	10.2	2.4	4.0
2-4	55.8	42.2	45.1
5-6	24.7	39.3	36.2
7+	9.3	16.0	14.6

Source: National Household Survey 1993, Dept. of Census & Statistics, Colombo (1995).

Table 5: Change in Total Fertility Rate in South Asian Countries, 1970-1975 to 1995-2000

<i>Region and Country</i>	1970-1975	1980-1985	1990-1995	1995-2000
South Asia				
Afghanistan	7.4	7.4	7.0	-
Bangladesh	6.4	5.3	4.3	3.8
Bhutan	5.9	5.9	5.7	5.5
India	5.4	4.5	3.7	3.3
Maldives	7.0	6.8	6.1	5.8
Nepal	5.8	5.5	5.1	4.8
Pakistan	6.3	6.2	5.8	5.5
Sri Lanka	4.1	3.4	2.4	2.1

Source: World Population Prospects; The 2000 Revision, Vol. I, New York: United Nations (2001)

Table 6: Life expectancy at birth and at age 60 by gender

South Asia		1975- 1980		2000-2005		2025-2030	
		M	F	M	F	M	F
Afghanistan	At birth	39.8	39.8	43.0	43.5	53.0	54.0
	Age 60	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bangladesh	At birth	19.1	46.4	60.6	60.8	69.6	71.6
	Age 60	-	-	15.2	16.4	16.9	18.4
Bhutan	At birth	44.5	46.5	62.0	64.5	69.9	74.0
	Age 60	-	-	17.1	18.1	18.7	20.2
India	At birth	53.3	52.4	63.6	64.9	69.9	73.4
	Age 60	-	-	16.1	17.9	18.1	20.7
Maldives	At birth	55.9	53.2	68.3	67.0	74.3	76.3
	Age 60	-	-	16.6	17.4	18.4	20.3
Nepal	At birth	47.0	45.4	60.1	59.6	69.4	71.6
	Age 60	-	-	15.2	16.3	18.5	18.4
Pakistan	At birth	51.3	50.7	61.2	60.9	69.2	70.4
	Age 60	-	-	16.1	16.7	18.2	19.3
Sri Lanka	At birth	65.0	68.5	69.9	75.9	74.4	80.3
	Age 60	-	-	17.0	20.0	18.6	23.1

Source: United Nations (2002), *World Population Ageing: 1950-2050*, New York (2002).

Table 7 : Per cent of widowed and divorced women of age 45-49 in South Asian countries

	Widowed		Divorced	
	1990s	Around 2000	1990s	Around 2000
South Asia				
Bangladesh	15.9	18.3	1.5	2.7
India	12.5	13.3	0.2	0.3
Nepal	12.0	10.1	0.1	0.0
Pakistan	6.5	-	0.2	-
Sri Lanka	12.4	10.4	0.4	0.5

Source: DHS Data Base.

Table 8: Percentage change in women's share of labour force in South Asian countries

	Women's share of labour force (% of age 15+)		Labour force (as % of total population) 1995
	1970	1995	
South Asia			
Bangladesh	40	42	50
Bhutan	39	39	49
India	33	31	43
Maldives	36	43	41
Nepal	39	40	46
Pakistan	21	26	36
Sri Lanka	25	36	42

Source: Key indicators of developing Asian and Pacific Countries 1998, Vol. XXIX, Philippines; Asian Development Bank (1998).

Table 9: Net migration and refugees: South Asian countries

Country	Population 2000 (‘000)	Migration stock 2000		Net Migration 1995-2000		2000
		Number (‘000)	Percentage	Number (‘000)	Rate per 1000 People	Number of Refugees (‘000)
<i>South Asia</i>						
Sri Lanka	18924	397	2.1	-31	-1.7	0
India	1008937	6271	0.6	-280	-0.3	171
Pakistan	141256	4243	3.0	-70	-0.5	2001
Nepal	23043	619	2.7	-24	-1.1	129
Bangladesh	137439	988	0.7	-60	-0.5	22
Maldives	291	3	1.1	0	0.0	**
Bhutan	2085	10	0.5	-1	-0.5	00

Notes: ** Insignificant

Source: UN (2002), *International Migration 2002: Data Sheet*, New York.

Table 10: Percentage of population residing in urban areas by South Asian countries (1980 – 2020)

Country	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
Afghanistan	15.7	18.2	22.2	28.2	35.9
Bangladesh	11.3	16.4	22.9	30.3	38.2
Bhutan	3.9	5.3	7.8	11.4	16.2
India	23.1	27.0	32.3	39.9	47.3
Nepal	6.1	9.6	14.3	20.0	26.8
Pakistan	28.1	32.0	37.9	45.4	53.1
Sri Lanka	21.6	21.4	24.2	30.7	38.6
South Asia	23.1	27.3	32.8	39.9	47.7

Source: UN (1991)

Table 11: Average household size in urban areas in 1990s

Region and Country	Urban	Rural	Total
South Asia			
Bangladesh	5.2	5.2	5.2
India	5.2	5.6	5.4
Nepal	5.0	5.3	5.3
Pakistan	7.2	6.5	6.7
Sri Lanka	4.8	4.5	4.5

Source: Demography and Health Surveys Data Base

Table 12: Percentage of population age 60 years and over in South Asian countries

Region & Country	1975	2000	2025
<i>South Asia</i>			
Afghanistan	4.7	4.7	5.2
Bangladesh	5.5	4.9	8.4
Bhutan	5.7	6.5	7.0
India	6.2	7.6	12.5
Maldives	6.9	5.3	6.2
Nepal	5.7	5.9	7.1
Pakistan	5.5	5.8	7.3
Sri Lanka	6.3	9.3	18.0

Source: United Nations (2002), *World Population Ageing: 1950-2050*, New York (2002).

Table 13: Potential support ratio in South Asian countries

Region & Country	1975	2000	2025
<i>South Asia</i>			
Afghanistan	19.4	18.9	17.8
Bangladesh	14.8	18.6	12.9
Bhutan	15.8	12.5	12.4
India	14.7	12.4	8.2
Maldives	12.2	15.0	15.0
Nepal	16.1	14.8	13.6
Pakistan	16.1	14.8	12.7
Sri Lanka	14.8	10.8	5.5

Note: The Potential Support Ratio is the number of persons age 15-64 per every person ages 65 or over.

Source: United Nations (2002), *World Population Ageing: 1950-2050*, New York (2002).

Table 14: Distribution of elderly persons by type of occupation

Occupation	Bangladesh		Pakistan		Sri Lanka	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Agriculture, self-employed	21.4	2.9	10.5	1.0	42.3	0.5
Agricultural workers	5.5	2.9	2.0	0.5	-	-
Nonagricultural, self-employed	2.3	9.3	2.5	14.9	5.6	25.2
Non-agricultural, private Individual employed	0.0	2.4	1.5	1.0	1.4	2.4
Non-agricultural, private company Employed	0.5	1.0	1.0	4.4	0.5	1.4
Government	0.5	4.4	0.5	1.5	7.5	27.5
Non-worked	69.8	77.1	82.0	76.7	42.7	43.0

Source: UN, (1999)

Table 15: Social support pattern and income of the elderly by gender: help to children in generating income

Social support Question	Gender	How	Case
Do elderly help children to generate income without or by getting paid?	Male	Yes, without getting paid	334
		Yes, by getting paid	191
		No	11
		Not available	69
	Female	Yes, without getting paid	63
		Yes, by getting paid	186
		No	81
		Not available	1
		No	62
		Not available	42

Source: UN, (1997)